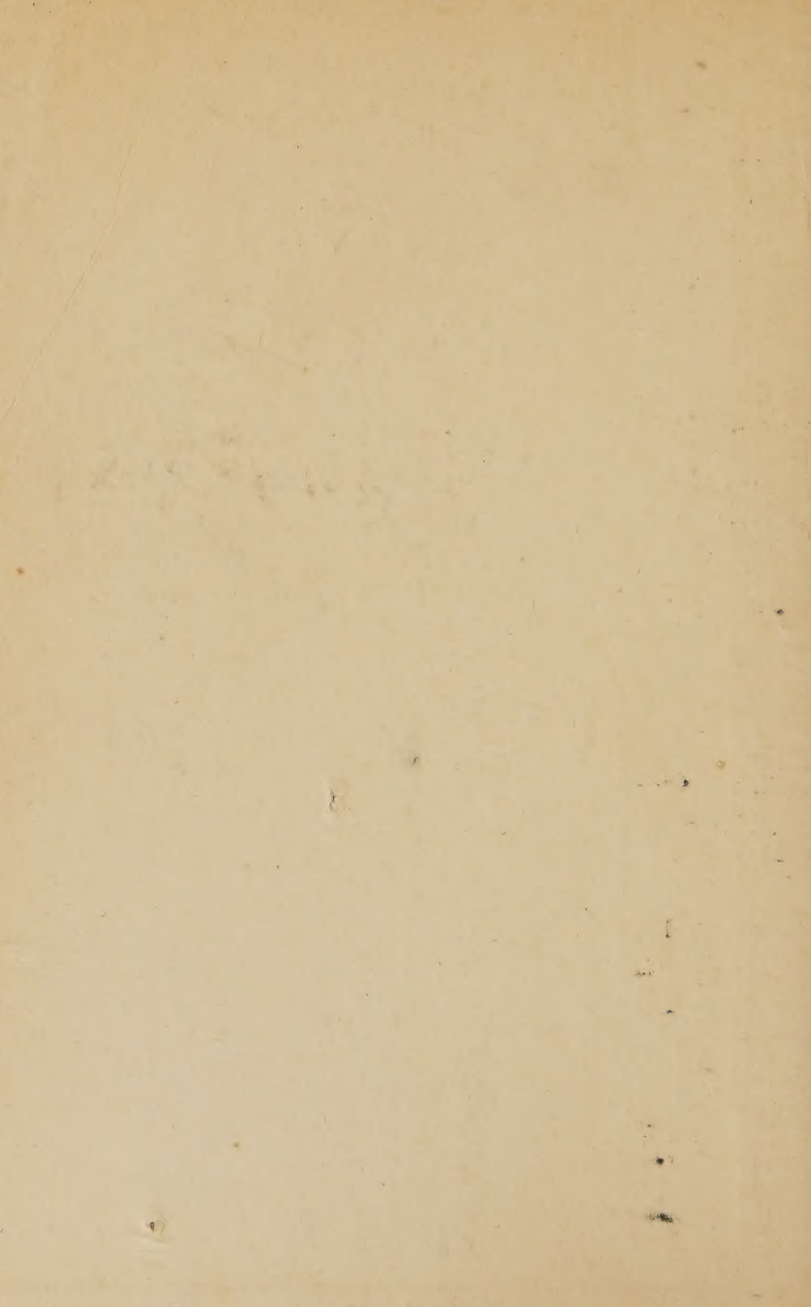



JUDY  
of ROGUES'  
HARBOR  
GRACE MILLER WHITE



Dorothy Jackson







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# JUDY OF ROGUES' HARBOR

BY  
GRACE MILLER WHITE

AUTHOR OF  
TESS OF THE STORM COUNTRY,  
THE SECRET OF THE STORM COUNTRY,  
ROSE O PARADISE, Etc.



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**THE H. K. FLY COMPANY**



*Lovingly I dedicate this book to  
my soldier Boy, BOBBY,  
and his brave-hearted comrades "Over There."*



# CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. The Ghost Boy . . . . .	9
II. A Little Bit Off'n God . . . . .	15
III. "Rot," Said Grandpap . . . . .	29
IV. The House of Mystery . . . . .	40
V. Love's All Bosh . . . . .	48
VI. I'll Do What I Can . . . . .	55
VII. Denny . . . . .	60
VIII. "I Won't Marry Any Duffer" . . . . .	64
IX. The Little General . . . . .	76
X. Olive Talks . . . . .	83
XI. Citizens of the World . . . . .	98
XII. Covering Denny's Trail . . . . .	105
XIII. David Carmen . . . . .	117
XIV. A Promise . . . . .	123
XV. A Visit in the Night . . . . .	132
XVI. "Rattle Your Bones" . . . . .	143
XVII. Don't Make Me Say It Any Plainer . . . . .	149
XVIII. Peter the Wonderful . . . . .	157
XIX. "Talk God" . . . . .	164
XX. Something Worser'n Death . . . . .	169
XXI. Love Me a Little . . . . .	176
XXII. "Lord! What a Scrape!" . . . . .	182
XXIII. Legs of Bronze . . . . .	190
XXIV. You'll Be My Woman . . . . .	198
XXV. King of America . . . . .	206
XXVI. The Soon Coming . . . . .	212
XXVII. "I Love You So!" . . . . .	218

# CONTENTS—*Continued*

CHAPTER	PAGE
XXVIII. A Game of Making Mud Pies . . .	228
XXIX. German Philosophy . . .	235
XXX. Results Count In the End . . .	242
XXXI. " 'Raus Mitt You" . . .	253
XXXII. Peter Is Told. . . . .	259
XXXIII. A Lick Against Germany . . .	266
XXXIV. Ten Bottles of Suds . . .	271
XXXV. "As God Wills, My Son" . . .	280
XXXVI. "He Will Carry You Through". . .	288
XXXVII. Where Is Senator Kingsland? . .	298
XXXVIII. Cleaning Out a Muss . . .	308
XXXIX. The Dream Baby . . .	316
XL. "I'm Done With the Huns" . . .	323
XLI. 'A Dark Night, a Storm and a Baby Girl . . . . .	337
XLII. "Don't Spoil It All" . . .	346
XLIII. "Let Him Die Then" . . .	350



## Judy of Rogues' Harbor



# Judy of Rogues' Harbor

## CHAPTER I

### THE GHOST-BOY

ON the eighteenth day of May in the year 1917, a man well along in the sixties stepped out of a large automobile some distance north from McKinney's Point on the east shore of Lake Cayuga.

"Wait here, Benson," he said to the chauffeur. Then he took out his watch, looked at it and slipped it back into his pocket. "Or rather, if you like, drive about! . . . It's two o'clock. I'll be gone an hour, probably more."

Benson touched the tip of his cap.

"I'll wait here, sir," he said. "It's shady!"

And shady the approach to Rogues' Harbor certainly was—a perfect bower woven from the overhanging branches of the tall trees that lined the highway, only here and there allowing the sun's beams to filter through to the shining macadam that wound its crooked way along the shore of the lake.

Senator Roderick Kingsland walked toward the north. It might have been his decision to go that day to Rogues' Harbor that had lengthened the lines in his face, that had corrugated his high forehead and brought to his eyes that unmistakable expression of secret fear. When he came into a space where the trees were less crowded, where the white light of the sun struck full upon him, no softer expression relieved the bitter twist of his lips, nor did the beauty of the day uplift his

lowering brows. After a short walk his painful reverie slackened his pace a little, and the persons involved in the events of his earlier years raced before his vision like a never ending circle of ghosts. How many times he had argued with himself, as if with another person, that a crime seventeen years old was outlawed morally as well as legally. What folly to keep on resurrecting it!

Kingsland frowned and sighed. He was finding to his sorrow, as many another man has, that setting crooked things straight is neither simple nor easy.

To the right of him was that lofty shelf of giant trees, to the left the lake, placid in the high hour of a beautiful afternoon. In the upper air, the wind was blowing out of the west. Although no disturbing breeze ruffled the mirror-smoothness of the water, the cloud-shadows marched steadily and silently toward him. One after another, they lost themselves in the half-light under the trees. The greens of the water changed continually from lighter to darker and from darker to lighter, as the fleecy vapors in the blue above obscured the sun for a moment. The opposite hill reared itself steeply from a rocky shore; its lower reaches forest clad, presenting an alluring array of greens and browns, while the cleared and cultivated fields in the upper portion contrasted with and repeated the hues and tones of lake and forest.

With all his soul Roderick Kingsland hated that May-day errand. Several times he mopped his brow, although the day was not so hot as one might think to look at him. When he came within sight of Rogues' Harbor, mixed emotions were depicted on his white face by the longer drawing down of his thin lips. Wearied by his tramp, he sat down at the edge of the path that ran for a distance along the Lehigh Valley tracks.

"I'm a fool," he muttered, "an absolute fool. What do I care whether she lives or dies?"

But seemingly he did care for he rose and went on



after the lapse of a few minutes, his course still northward.

All nature expressed peace and quietude, so at variance with the emotions tugging at his innerself, that again, he dropped down in the shadow of a clump of trees. He was tired to his bones, tired of the sun there in the sky, tired of everything. Even more than tired was he as he considered this visit to Rogues' Harbor. It wasn't all fatigue that made him stretch his long body in the shade, but disgust, disgust at himself that at last he had been forced to make this journey, when for years he had sworn inwardly that nothing should ever tempt him any further north than Fall Creek. But today—well, that morning he had suddenly come to the conclusion that he'd go to Rogues' Harbor.

His thoughts turned to his grandson, young Theodore Kingsland, and his ambitions for him. The recollection of the boy with his fervent patriotism brought a sympathetic smile to Kingsland's lips.

From Teddy to Teddy's father, Kingsland's mind drifted. The declaration of war would bring his son home from Germany, and Peter Kingsland meant more to his father than any other being in the world. Of course he was proud of his daughter, Sarah, but there was only one Peter—his boy—the very flesh of his flesh and bone of his bones. When Peter had chosen literature for a profession, his father had not openly demurred, although he would have preferred his son to carry on the Kingsland interests after his own retirement from business in Ithaca, but Peter had won praise for his literary work and would be famous some time, so the critics said.

He couldn't blame his motherless children for their long stay abroad. Hadn't he consented when a formal invitation had come from his dead wife's people for them to visit the Fatherland, as Peter called Germany? He had always regretted that Peter had married abroad for he had never seen his son's wife; she had

died, giving birth to the boy, Theodore, but he was delighted at Peter's request that the child should be reared at Kingsland Court.

Kingsland recalled rather grimly his son's one serious effort at managing Teddy. Some years since, Peter had suddenly awakened to the fact that Theodore in order to attain the height of culture, ought to be put into a German gymnasium preparatory to a course at the Munich University, so he had sent an order for the boy to come to him.

Teddy remained in Berlin for some time and then wrote to his grandfather for permission to return to Ithaca. In the letters which passed between grandfather and grandson, the boy had loyally reiterated his love for Peter, but had declared vehemently he didn't like Germany and wanted to come back to the United States. Again in Ithaca, Teddy soon forgot the stilted, foreign ways of Prussia and became a stalwart young American.

So the years passed, Theodore growing more and more in appearance like Peter every day—years that would have been blessedly content to Ithaca's powerful Senator, if the dead Donald Ricardo had allowed him to rest in peace.

His mind went back to the time when he had struggled as a country lawyer to make ends meet. Then he had vowed desperately he would be rich! Some day, perhaps, the richest man in the state! Peter and Sarah's demands were endless. He had to have more money than came from his law practice, and then—Kingsland shuddered when he recalled the day young Donald Ricardo had come to him for advice. It hadn't taken the keen lawyer long to discover that the boy was rich beyond his own knowledge. Even after all these years, he could visualize the earnest young face and hear the eager voice.

"I want your help, sir," the boy had said. "My father and mother 're dead, and I haven't anyone to ask

just what to do. I don't want to go home! The fact is, I'm married."

Then Kingsland's memory brought back Ricardo's halting history of his clandestine marriage. Nobody must know at that time, Don had said, for Herman Ketchel, Claudia's father, was well known for his brutality. No, Donald had admitted, his wife's folks weren't quite—well, quite the same as some other families around Ithaca, but she, his Claudia, was better and lovelier than any other girl living.

Ah, well, that was almost seventeen years ago, ran through Kingsland's mind, and Donald Ricardo was dead!

But the Ketchel girl, Don had married? Was she dead too? Of course, the child was living or Herman Ketchel would have written him. Underneath his thin lips, he set his teeth together closely. Peter should never know, nor Teddy either, for that matter, about the girl at Rogues' Harbor. No person in the world but Roderick Kingsland knew there would have been no Kingsland fortune, if it had not been for Donald Ricardo and his boyish confidence and trust.

He remembered, with a frown, the night he had carried the baby to Ketchel's. How carefully he had kept from the German farmer that he was receiving into his house his daughter's child. Money was offered by Kingsland to Ketchel, and Ketchel, poor and greedy, promised to bring up the little girl as one of his own blood.

He remembered too, with shame, the sly, off-hand inquiries he had put to Ketchel whether he ever intended to allow his daughter to come home, and what he knew of her.

"Don't know nothing," Ketchel had snapped. "She's gone an' got married! She's made 'er bed, let 'er waller in it for all I care. She's writ a few times, but I stuck the letters in the stove without readin' them."

At the time this statement had made Kingsland

secure, but that security had gone with the appearance of the ghost-boy who kept his silent position ever in his sight. The shade of the boy he had robbed was just there on the railroad track! The man could see him plainly, as he ever saw the flimsy figure, with no touch of color but the accusing, blue eyes.

How ghastly it all was! Nights—yes, and days too, had been filled with that haunting spirit ever at his elbow. Out of the shadows, out of every gleam of sunshine, there came solemn, demanding voices! Condemnatory voices that stung him to desperation, and had, at last, driven him to Rogues' Harbor.

No longer able to sit alone with his memories, he got up, took the cinder path at the side of the railroad track and walked on rapidly. Upon a narrow uneven trail, he struck off east, mounted the steep bluff, climbed the fence and stood panting in the fodder field below Herman Ketchel's farmhouse.

The pain in his side, always there, sometimes less and sometimes more excruciating, drove him to the shelter of a great tree. There he sank down exhausted. He wanted to go back to Ithaca, but perhaps, by seeing Ketchel, he might lay that uneasy spirit of Donald Ricardo if he found the baby of sixteen years back were still living and—and happy.



## CHAPTER II

### A LITTLE BIT OFF'N GOD

A low whistle caused him to turn his head and look around. A girl was walking through the tall grass in his direction, unaware of his presence. Roderick Kingsland stared at her as if a phantom had appeared before him. She might have been sixteen, more or less; Kingsland couldn't tell. He only knew that the tingling of his nerves subsided a little at the sight of her smiling face, uplifted to the blue skies, and her red lips sending out a bird-like thrill. She came to a standstill in the center of the field, radiant in glorious youth, and as lithe and straight as the young sapling at Kingsland's side. At her left a large, black cat moved, unmindful of the birds and crickets crossing and recrossing before him.

Senator Kingsland made no effort to acquaint the young stranger with his nearness, but kept his eyes upon her. Suddenly she began to move again toward him, and, with all his might, he stilled his breathing. The closer she came, the lovelier she seemed. Heaps of curls, softly yellow, floated about her. He even caught the purplish glow of her blue eyes.

A little distance from him, she chose a wall of shadow cast by the trees bordering the field. There she stopped and sat down. Her voice, calling the cat, came to Kingsland across the stillness of the summer air, ringing, musical, like sudden harmony touching his ear.

The animal bounded into the girl's outstretched arms, and she cooed and caressed him as a vital, young mother does her child.

"The Poot'll be a good kitty-cat, while Judy talks to

the birdies, eh?" Kingsland heard her say distinctly. "Now squat, honey, an' I'll cover your face with my skirt. Some of the birdies might get scared of you." She kissed the cat several times in rapid succession, then put him on the grass beside her. "There now! see, pretty Poot-cat. I'm goin' to give them bread," she smiled. With a quick sweep of her arm, she scattered the bread crumbs over her dress and down to her feet.

"Squat, Poot," she said again.

The cat crouched flat upon the earth, and a calico skirt was thrown over his black head and body.

Kingsland lay perfectly quiet. What was the girl going to do with the cat and the crumbs? Surely no creature with wings to fly would approach near enough to pick up the bread! Then he saw her lie down on the grass and heard her whistling. The sound came at first very low from her puckered lips. Minute by minute passed in silence, save for her trilling notes, sometimes growing in volume, sometimes falling to low cadences until it seemed to Kingsland as if an importunate bird were seeking his lost mate. He could see her eyes sweep the leaf-crowned forest, glance upon glance projected from tree top to tree top as if in expectancy, and very soon too, he heard, or so it seemed to him, a thousand answering calls rise up from the stillness of the woodland.

Then, like a darkening cloud, there swept from the tall trees an army of birds. They gathered together in a dark mass over the fodder lot—circling and dipping above the little figure on the grass. For thirty seconds, perhaps, that feathered throng halted in the sunshine, then, like a great, dark bird, they dropped upon the girl and began picking industriously at the crumbs of bread.

Senator Kingsland felt his face grow pale to his ears. That any human being possessed this great power over that mighty forest family, seemed to him a heaven wrought miracle.

Easily could be distinguished the girl's call from the twitterings of the birds! Wasn't she satisfied with that dark shroud of rustling plumage? Apparently not, for up and up, and still more importunately up, sounded her unceasing whistle. In twos, and dozens, and even greater numbers, birds darted from north, south, east and west, and in their turn, circled the sky, then sought their places about the girl and cat.

A weird sensation crept over the watching man. His flesh felt as if every pore in it were pricked with needles. There was something supernatural about this young person draped from one end of her body to the other with these feathery things from the wilderness around Rogues' Harbor. With what power had she called the birds from their hidden homes? How had she subdued the natural killing instincts of the cat? It might have been the fading away of Donald Ricardo's ghostly presence, or it might have been the sight of the happy birds that softened the lines in Senator Kingsland's face and loosened the muscles about his mouth. Not even he could tell, but one thing was certain, he felt less fatigued, his mind more at ease than it had been since he'd decided to go to Rogues' Harbor.

The thought of Farmer Ketchel, and of the girl he was going to see brought him bolt upright. He couldn't afterwards remember that he had made any noise, but evidently he had, for like a black bolt that flock of birds rose from the greensward into the air, and with squawking, frightened cries, winged their way back into the forest.

The girl sat up slowly, a disappointed expression wrinkling her face. The cat crept forth from the enshrouding skirt and crawled into her lap. Instinctively, she hid the little brown feet and suntanned ankles under her calico dress. Cuddling the cat close, she turned an enquiring stare upon the newcomer.

Then Senator Kingsland got to his feet and, hat in hand, went forward. Before speaking, he studied the

serious young face. Out of a long ago yesterday—a yesterday when he was ambitious and ruthless, a boylike figure sprang up beside her. The thing he saw was Donald Ricardo, no longer a ghost but the boy himself. Kingsland went cold in spite of the day. Was he crazy that he allowed himself to consider such a preposterous notion? It wasn't possible for the dead to come back. Never! Never!

He drove away the impression that Don Ricardo was there in the open field, but he couldn't get rid of the notion that the same startled look which shone from the purple eyes before him, the lad's gaze had held when he had been coldly told his money was gone. An appalling conviction took possession of him. The bird-girl had brought him from Ithaca to Rogues' Harbor. Of that Kingsland was as sure as that he was living.

So this was what the years had made of the wee thing he might have smothered with his hand. He had resisted that impulse when he carried the babe through the night and storm, and now—now to his horror, the ghostly presence that had haunted him, ranged itself beside her. He felt frightened and ashamed before them,—before the blooming child and the pallid apparition which was her father. He wanted to turn and walk away, to go back to Kingsland Court, to tell Teddy, and to confide in David Carmen.

During the short space of time he looked down upon her, he took firm hold of his quaking nerves, and vowed vehemently to himself that she, no, nor the ghost-boy there should dislodge him from his rock of public esteem.

Now Senator Kingsland was a great man in Tompkins County. At the head of his party, he had stood like a pillar of stone, steadily, year after year, building up that marvelous House of Kingsland, sweeping out of his way every obstacle small or big that attempted to impede him.

He knew very well he couldn't go away without saying something to Miss Blue Eyes, but for the first time in his

life, he was tongue-tied, embarrassed. He imagined he was losing his mind—he must be. No man of proper balance was ever tortured by the dead, nor ought he to stand like an imbecile before a yellow haired girl, boylike in her youth—and poverty stricken. Certainly she was poor. Her clothes were old, her whole attire faded and commonplace. Then something within him groaned. He and he alone was to blame for the condition of the young thing there, huddled in the grass.

While he gazed down upon her, she was staring back at him. Then a frank, irresistible smile parted her red lips, showing two rows of white teeth.

“You scared away all my birdies,” she said at length. “Anybody comin’ quick like that,” she snapped her fingers, “always frightens ’em away.”

Kingsland bowed. He didn’t know what made him, seemingly his head went forward without volition of his own.

“I’m sorry,” he said lamely. A hot flush mounted his forehead for no visible reason whatever! There had been no rebuke in her tones, so why should the blood rage in his ears and beat around his temples? He knew why! It was the memory of a boy who in crazed despair had exclaimed, “but I had loads of money, Mr. Kingsland. It can’t be all gone!—Where is it?”

“You look awful hot, sir,” said the girl. “Sit down, won’t you? The Poot-cat won’t bite you.”

Against his will and judgment, Senator Kingsland seated himself on the grass beside her.

“If he won’t eat your bird-friends,” he said, “then, of course he won’t hurt me.”

What a silly thing for a man of his dignity to say! His voice hadn’t sounded like his own at all.

The little figure on the grass cuddled the great cat closer.

“Well, it’s like this,” she explained. “The Poot’s only a barn cat, an’ he don’t get any kisses only what I give ’im. . . . Grandpap won’t let ’im in the house,”



she sighed deeply. "No, to be honest an' true, this cat ain't dead in love with the birds, but——"

"But the birdies 're dead in love with you, aren't they?" broke in Kingsland.

Another inane remark for a man of his position to make! The Kingsland of an hour ago battled with the Kingsland of this moment, and the haunting figure seemed less threatening.

The girl nodded her yellow head. Something divinely sweet shone on her thoughtful face.

"Sure," she acquiesced, "but that's because I love them so! Somehow—somehow," she repeated, "when you love terrible much, you get terrible much loved back. . . . That's it, I guess."

The distinguished Senator from Ithaca, and the little denizen of Rogues' Harbor sat in the shade and gazed silently out over the unwrinkled surface of Lake Cayuga, while each pursued his own line of thought.

"You don't know grandfather Ketchel now, do you, eh?" she began at last, putting into words the matter she'd been considering.

Her question seemed to give something like vitality to the menacing figure of the ghost-boy. A heavy grip took hold of Kingsland's heart, and a sudden pain under his ribs kept back the answer that sprang to his lips.

"My grandpap up here in Rogues' Harbor," the girl continued, "he says, grandpap does, love's all bosh. . . . Ever been up here before, mister?" Holding the cat with one arm, she swept the other outward. "That's Rogues' Harbor! See?"

"Yes," murmured Kingsland, still struggling with the pain.

"Rich folks don't come to the Harbor much," went on the girl. "Where'd you come from?"

"Ithaca!" replied the man in low tones.

The girl contemplated him for some moments.

"Ithaca?" she echoed, "now I know for sure grandpap's all wrong in what he says."



"Wrong?" monotoned Kingsland.

The girl hitched a little nearer him and bobbed her head.

"Grandpap says, 'There's only devils livin' in Ithaca,'" she explained, "but my Lady of Roses,—do you know 'er?"

Kingsland shook his head.

"Well, she says, my Lady of Roses does, 'There ain't no place in all this wide world,'"—the speaker made a sweeping gesture with one slender arm from which the blouse sleeve fell back, leaving it bare almost to the shoulder—" 'not any place in the hull world, Rogues' Harbor or Ithaca, where love ain't.' "

Kingsland went giddy. At this moment he felt so sick, and Ricardo's daughter— Was she Donald Ricardo's child after all? Of course! She had the same eyes,—and she repeated in tones of living color the form and expression of the ghost-boy at her side.

" 'God's everywhere,' my Lady says, an' she ought to know more about it'n grandpap, hadn't she? Because he ain't stirred out of Rogues' Harbor this many a year, granddaddy ain't, but my Lady——"

"Yes, your lady, child?" interrupted Kingsland.

The yellow curls dropped over the black cat like a shower of flimsy gold.

"She's a bit off'n God, I guess, my Lady is," was the answer. "Just lovin' everything and everybody! Well, she looks like you did a little while ago when you smiled at me."

There was no levity in the ringing voice, no shade of ridicule in the purple-blue eyes. On the girl's sun-burned face was an expression that touched Kingsland deeply. Again he grappled with himself to maintain his equilibrium.

" 'God's one great, big, happy smile,' my Lady of Roses says," proceeded the girl, "that's how I know she's a bit of Him." The brown of her skin gave place to

crimson which brightened her eyes and made her look even more like an overgrown child.

"But then, oh Lordy!" she hurried on, "why everything loves her, everything smiles at her, everything does, only grandpap, an' he ain't never seen 'er."

"Your grandfather's Herman Ketchel?" thrust in Kingsland, abruptly.

Another bob of the curly head was followed by, "You know my grandfather, sir, eh?"

Without replying to her question, Kingsland asked, "What's your name, my dear?"

"Just Judy Kutchel. Grandpap calls me Judy-flack when he wants to get me mad. He says Judy-flack means a fool. Other folks just call me Judy, an' Olive Ketchel's my cousin, an' Herman Ketchel's my grandpap, only nuther one of 'em likes me very well." A radiant expression passed over her face. "But no matter 'bout that, sir. Someday they will. . . . My Lady told me a lot of lovely things, an' I say 'em over an' over."

"For instance?" Kingsland broke in on her dreamy meditation.

The girl flashed him a quick glance.

"What's that you said, sir?" she faltered.

"I mean what did this lady, your lady, teach you?" questioned Kingsland.

The girl thought a moment.

"You honest want me to tell you?" she queried shyly. "Grandpap calls it rubbish."

An affirmative nod from Kingsland made her continue.

"Then I will, an' mebbe, when you get back to Ithaca, you'll get thinkin' about it, an' if you're sad, it'll make you happy, an' if you're happy, sir, then you'll get happier'n ever."

Kingsland groaned mentally. Happy! He hadn't known a contented moment in a score of years.

"I've tried to tell 'em to grandpap," the young voice trailed on, "but he's so mad 'bout the war with the

Fatherland, he can't see nothing but hate. But my Lady says, 'Where love is, there ain't no room for hatin'.' " She sighed, and the young face grew sorrowful. "I wish they'd get a real, livin' love in Germany! Don't you, sir?"

Senator Kingsland frowned as he, too, thought of Germany and of Peter, his wonderful Peter.

"It would make all the difference in the world," he acquiesced.

"Perhaps they will. Here's hopin'," smiled the girl. "But Lordy, massy me!" Then a set of slender fingers went to her lips, but immediately fell back to the ebony cat. "Lordy, massy me, ain't a very nice way to speak," she exclaimed, flushing. "My Lady told me so. I meant—well, mister, I meant there ain't no place where God ain't—Ithaca, Rogues' Harbor or anywheres. *He's* everywhere, an' every little birdie—like my birdies over there in the woods—can't lose a feather but Jesus knows 'bout it. . . . Have you ever read the Bible, Mister?"

By a forward bend of his head, Kingsland assented dazedly. Never before had anyone talked that way to him. Yet, somehow, he felt comforted—and he liked the ring in her voice and the ever-changing expression of her face.

"Then you know it's true, what my Lady says," she cried triumphantly, "that when folks leave off hatin' each other, an' love comes slammin' in, there won't be no wars, nor nothin', like that!" She hesitated and went on swiftly, "Of course, I know the Germans 've got to be walloped like bad brats! It's the only thing that'll make 'em behave."

Kingsland felt almost hysterical. He crushed down the desire to laugh.

"And who told you that?" he asked brusquely.

"Doc Carmen said it to grandpap once," explained Judy. "You see, my grandfather gets awful mad fits, an' one day, he let fly the devil in 'im, an' his face got

red, an' he got sick, an' Doc Carmen,—you know him? A fine lookin' doctor man from Ithaca, huh?"

"Yes," was all Kingsland could say.

"He's a good old scout, Doc Carmen is. Well, he come to our house when Grandfather Ketchel was sick, an' he put grandpap in bed an' scolded 'im good. He said . . . why, mister, Doc Carmen said right to my granddaddy's face, 'When the Germans get a damn good lickin', Ketchel, they'll go home an' mind their own business.' I told, I——"

Kingsland's interest brought his face inches nearer hers.

"Yes! Yes, you told Doctor Carmen—what?" he ejaculated.

The girl shook her head.

"Nothin'! I didn't tell him anything! But I told it all to my Lady of Roses, an' she cried,—an' we both cried,—an' then she said, 'War's awful!' . . . 'Tis, too, ain't it?"

"It certainly is! But, but are—are you happy?"

To have saved his life, Senator Kingsland could not have kept back that personal question, yet, but a short time before, he had said to himself that he didn't care whether the girl lived or died.

A dimple appeared in Judy's cheek.

"Happy," she nodded, "well, I guess yes! There ain't a kid 'bout Rogues' Harbor happy like me!"

Judy was going to add something to this, but Kingsland stopped her.

"And your grandfather, is he good to you?" he inquired.

"Good's he knows how to be, I guess," was her non-committal answer.

Kingsland was choked by a long, indrawn breath. That was his errand to Rogues' Harbor, just to know if Herman Ketchel was good to this child.

"Grandpap an' me know each other pretty well, we

do!" she affirmed. "I love 'im heaps, even if he don't like me."

"What do you mean when you say you and your grandfather know each other? Tell me that, will you?"

He turned his head sharply as if some presence had passed by and touched him. Ah, the boy of the blue eyes was over there near that large tree. That was farther away than he'd been for years.

"Tell me what you meant," he repeated abruptly.

He desired to know before he left for he never intended to come to Rogues' Harbor again. Never!

"Tell me," he reiterated.

Judy smiled.

"Grandpap made a bargain with me over two years ago," she began.

"And the bargain?" interjected Kingsland.

The dimple faded away, and a pained expression came into the girl's blue eyes.

"Well, you see, sir, I've got a little brother, a little mite, only half past four."

Again, that unendurable pain struck sudden weakness to Kingsland, making him speechless. His under jaw shook and then fell limp. A brother! Then she wasn't Ricardo's daughter after all! What a beastly trick his imagination had played upon him when he had traced in her a likeness to the haunting ghost that never allowed him to rest a minute, day or night!

"Yes, you said you have a brother?" he managed to ask.

The girl flashed him a knowing glance.

"Sure," she assented, "a bully little fellow! Half past four my brother, Denny, is. When my daddy brought him home to grandpap, Denny wasn't as long as the Poot-cat here is without 'is tail." She touched the cat tenderly. "Then my daddy died, an' grandpap, oh, he's just like all Germans! He just loves to wallop folks. But he can't help it, I 'spose! Denny couldn't crawl before grandpap began whackin' at 'im with his

cane." He lips quivered, and she swallowed hard. There wasn't a sign of the dimples as she blundered on, "I just couldn't stand it, I couldn't. The little fellow was always so hurt an' so scared, an' he didn't seem to grow much! So, two years ago, I said to Grandfather Ketchel, I said, 'Grandpap, every time you get the feelin' you've got to lick Denny, I'll let you give me two whacks to Denny's one, if you won't beat him.' So——" Tears gathered like mist on the long lashes—"when granddaddy's mad at Denny, mister, I take two whacks, an' the baby goes scott free." She looked up into the man's white, set face. "Awful, ain't it? . . . But 'twas the only way Denny'd ever get to grow any with grandpap always rampin' at 'im. Sure, it's true, the poor, little thing ain't very fat yet, but," her voice seemed to gather strength, "Denny's better an' better every day, now, though Ollie don't like 'im."

"Who's Ollie?" interrupted Kingsland.

"I told you once she's my cousin. She lives with us, too, an' a fine, good German grandpap's made out of her."

Kingsland dared not show the suspense he felt.

"And this cousin of yours," he ventured. "Has she a brother, or——"

"Nope!" interrupted Judy. "Olive's just by herself. Denny an' me belong to grandpap's boy, Bill, an' Olive to Uncle Oscar. If daddy'd lived, Denny an' me would 've been with 'im somewheres, but he didn't."

"Poor little girl," sympathized Kingsland. He got to his feet with difficulty. At the same time he took a box from his pocket. He was trembling, suffering acutely. He wanted to go home. This strange starry-eyed child had upset all his notions. While she wasn't the girl he'd come to see, yet, something in the bright, yearning face, in the eyes, sometimes purple, sometimes blue, attracted him immensely. And Olive, the other girl, the girl so good a German! Kingsland groaned when he thought of her. She must be Ricardo's girl.



It seemed as if the foundation under his colossal building of years was rolling away stone by stone. The wraith-boy came so close to his mental vision that instinctively, he put up his hand as if to protect himself from a terrible danger. Through the ghastly whiteness of the thing that haunted him, he discerned the outlines of the girl, looking up at him wonderingly.

"Here's something for you," he said hoarsely. "Here, take it!"

Judy Ketchel allowed the cat to spring from her arms as she scrambled up.

"What is it?" she asked, taking the box from his hand.

Kingsland tried to smile at her.

"Candy—candy for a good girl," he told her.

Reluctantly she held the box out to him, pathos in every line of the lovely face.

"Then 'tain't for me," she murmured, "I ain't good yet,—but, oh, sir, I'm tryin' to be, an' I ain't sayin' it to get the candy nuther. You can bet your life on that!" She made an impetuous forward thrust with the package of sweets.

"I want you to keep it," insisted Kingsland, gravely. "No matter about the good part, just keep it."

Judy thanked him as well as she knew how.

"I'll give my share to Denny," she jubilated. "Ollie'll get some, an' grandpap, too." Her lips widened over her teeth whimsically. "Mebbe, it'll make my granddaddy grin like he does when he's asleep. You remember, mister, what I told you my Lady said, eh?"

"She told you so much," Kingsland responded.

With the box of candy held at her side, she stepped towards him, purple spreading away the blue of her eyes. The mist came back and touched the dark lashes.

"But the best part," she questioned earnestly, "the part about smilin'? . . . What she said 'bout smiles bein' God, an' God bein' Heaven?" She lifted and touched the beribboned bonbon box reverently. "If



some of these sweeties'll bring Grandfather Ketchel any nearer Heaven, then he gets 'em, see? I guess grandpap's good grin is a piece off'n God too."

She whirled away and ran swiftly through the field, the black cat bounding along at her side. Kingsland stared after her open-mouthed and panting. Presently, when the slender figure had disappeared, he stumbled back to the railroad tracks and, almost fainting from nervous exhaustion, reached his automobile.

## CHAPTER III

### "ROT," SAID GRANDPAP

SLOUCHED down in a splint-bottomed rocker, grandfather Ketchel turned his head slowly sidewise, took a long pull at the stem of a clay pipe in his mouth and grinned. He paid no attention to the raindrops pattering on the small window panes. He blew forth a thin stream of acrid smoke into the shabby kitchen, took the pipe in his fingers, sniffed and grinned again.

Grandfather sniffed and grinned because he suspected something was about to happen. In silence, he checked off some of the unusual happenings of the last seventeen years with significant wags of his head, sniffed and grinned, and, once more, began to smoke furiously.

The Ketchel homestead stood near the southern end of Rogues' Harbor. A barn nearby, even more rickety and untidy than the house, gave evidence of the occupant's shiftlessness and poverty. A path went down over the rocks to the tracks of the Lehigh Valley Railroad that ran along the east shore of Lake Cayuga. A rough and little used road led up the hill to the highway.

The Ketchel family had been among the first to settle in that nook in the hills, but that event had been long, long ago. Herman Ketchel vividly remembered leaving the Fatherland, and coming to Rogues' Harbor, remembered his grandfather and his grandfather's death. With the passing away of his own father, the farm had come to him, and since then he had always lived in the ramshackle farmhouse between the highway and the lake. Indeed, for many years he had not been to Ithaca at all, for Grandpap hated the city and was continually

venting his spleen in curses and dire imprecations upon all who dwelt there.

Many years ago his only daughter had been swallowed up by that detached world of evil, and more recently his roving sons, wrecked and hopeless, had crept home to Rogues' Harbor from the world beyond to die and leave the old man their children. Strange to say, Ketchel had dragged the young ones up somehow.

But at that moment grandpap wasn't thinking of his own people. His interest lay in the other occupant of the room, a tall, elderly man, who, by the look of him, had no place in Rogues' Harbor. That section of the country was for grandfather's kind, not for the immaculate attire of the stranger who, but a few minutes before, had loomed in the doorway.

When Senator Kingsland stepped across the threshold of the Ketchel farmhouse, he had thrown one piercing glance around the room. Near the window Herman Ketchel sat in an old armchair. In the shadowy corner opposite, crouched on a stool, was a child, a boy, and Kingsland stood several moments regarding him.

"Just half past four," Judy Ketchel had told him. Well, that meant the child wasn't five yet,—but how wee, how big-eyed and white faced! The bright, furtive eyes glowed like coals in the dim corner, and the man's sudden impulse was to drag the blighted boy-mite into the light of day . . . to do something for him.

Roderick Kingsland had not been able to banish from his mind the girl of yesterday, the small lover of barn-cats and birds. The thought of that other girl, German to the heart of her, nauseated him, but the blue-eyed ghost boy had driven him back again to face Herman Ketchel and his tribe.

Farmer Ketchel grinned and sniffed at the tall stranger, but he spoke no welcome. Only did he note the newcomer's fierce, strained gaze upon the boy in the corner. The old man raised his cane threateningly.

This action brought Denny Ketchel instantly to his feet, and he edged his way along the wall toward the door.

"'Raus mit you, demon," rasped grandpap, "get out to the barn!"

The Ithaca Senator moved aside as the little figure, casting backward fearful glances at his grandfather, fumbled with the door latch. Without a word, Kingsland opened the door, and the boy scuttled out into the rain and fled to the toppling barn. Then he closed the door, shook the drops of water from his hat and turned toward the old man in the armchair.

Ketchel mouthed the stem of his pipe.

"So you're back again?" he mumbled. "It's been many a long day since I've set eyes on you, mister."

"Yes, many a long day," assented Roderick Kingsland.

"An' you always come along with some kind of a storm," grinned Ketchel. "When you brought the brat, the weather was even worse than 'tis now. Weren't it?"

The man spoken to shrugged his shoulders.

"Perhaps," he admitted. "Where is—where is——"

The old German made a motion with his pipe toward the window.

"The second one down?" he questioned. "She's where she always is on days like this, a-huddlin' the storm an' motherin' her cat. No tellin' where the confounded brat goes to."

The visitor's mouth grew into a set line. Then he said, "I want to see her."

Grandfather Ketchel's face grew ashen.

"You're goin' to take Judy away, Kingsland?" he inquired. "Is that why you've come?"

"No!" replied the Senator, laconically, "but—how can that boy be Judy's brother? . . . He can't be!"

Ketchel, dislodging his pipe from his sagging mouth, sniffed and then grinned slowly.

"I had to tell 'er that as long as she believed Bill was her father, didn't I?" he grunted. "She thinks 'er own

mother died an' her daddy married again. One day, long toward night, Bill come a-luggin' home a boy-brat no bigger'n my hand an' then Bill died like Oscar did. The boy's ma was dead, so Bill said! Irish, she was. . . . Then I says to Judy, just like that, 'Here's a brother for you, Judy-flack.'" The old man grimaced like an automaton whose thready muscles were pulled by strings. Then he ran on monotonously, "Judy took to the kid like as if it'd been her own, an' she's stuck too." A sharp crack of the pipe bowl on the palm of the speaker's hand showed his temper. "Life's been a devil of a job to get through, anyway, an' now, now—mebbe—you're goin' to take her away. . . . Huh?"

"Whatever happens," interrupted Kingsland, curtly, "you'll get the money I promised you. . . . What about school! You haven't sent her to school as I told you to."

A deep, guttural sound came from the old German's throat.

"School!" he retorted, "Judy don't need no schoolin'! She's got more learnin' than any of my kids ever had. 'Twasn't up to me——"

Kingsland's hand came up quickly and interrupted the speaker.

"I told you to send her to school," he insisted.

Ketchel relighted his pipe.

"Just of late," he answered, "she's been anxious to learn things. You can be dead sure she ain't a Ketchel! She makes herself hoarse yellin' for the Stars and Stripes. I hate it, I do. I didn't bring my brats up that way. I brought 'em all up to give the Fatherland respect, I did. How'd I know your wants an' wishes save what you told me when the brat wasn't no bigger'n a fish. You was mighty careful never to put no word in any of your letters. Learnin's all right with high-toned folks, but with the likes of Judy Ketchel—well, if you hadn't been sendin' me money, she'd been out to service long ago."

"But I did," persisted the other, surly-toned. "So get along and bring her in."

With a croak and a groan, Grandfather Ketchel stood up. He laid his pipe on the window ledge and hobbled toward the door and opened it.

Kingsland heard him mutter an oath.

"So you was there listenin', you huzzy," gritted Ketchel. "Get along an' bring in the second one down. If you can't find 'er in the woods, go to the haunted house. 'Raus, I say! A little rain won't melt you. You ain't sugar nor salt."

The old man shuffled back into the kitchen and slammed the door.

"That's Olive, Oscar's girl," he explained. "Suppose she saw you comin' an', bein' a woman, sneaked up to find out what was goin' on."

Kingsland walked to the window and glanced out. He was glad the girl he had come to see was not this drab, young thing, limping hastily away toward that long row of trees. Breathing more easily, he moved to the middle of the kitchen, and turning followed the German with his eyes.

"Women 're sneaks anyway," growled Ketchel, "but Olive's better'n the second one down, Olive is, an' she's better'n Denny too. Olive's like the Ketchels! Just plain all 'round German—speak a word against the Fatherland an' she gets black like thunder. Now Judy Ketchel,—bah! She makes a feller sick, talkin' liberty. To hell with the Stars and Stripes an' up, up, an' farther up with the German Eagle, by Gott! So I say," he ended and sat down.

Senator Kingsland's face whitened, then flushed a deep red, but he remained silent.

"Just to show you she ain't no decent girl, I'll tell you this," grandpap took up, presently. "She's got a chance to get married, Judy has, to a good, young German, a feller as true to the Fatherland as I be, but



she keeps puttin' 'im off 'til, if I was Sliver Jim, I'd let 'er alone or take 'er anyhow."

A peculiar expression crossed the listener's face. After all, was he going to be relieved of doing this thing which he detested so? In his eagerness to hear whether the girl with the blue eyes, who made friends of the forest creatures, loved a worthy man, he leaned over anxiously.

"Sliver Jim!" he rapped out. "Who's Sliver Jim?"

"I said he were a fine young German," drawled the farmer. "His name's Shuckies. He's got a truck farm up here in Lansing, Sliver Jim has. He's been comin' after Judy Ketchel for two years now, but with her it's always, 'Wait, wait, wait.' . . . What's the good of wastin' time on a woman?"

"Then she doesn't care for him, I fancy, by what you've said?" asked Kingsland, uneasily.

An inarticulate noise came alongside Ketchel's pipe stem.

"She only says she won't get married. Always makes out it's Denny what keeps her home here. . . . Well, mebbe 'tis, though she's a sly trollop! Now Olive would have Sliver if he'd wiggle his little finger. . . . He's wigglin' every finger he's got,—only at the wrong wench, that's all."

The speaker chuckled to himself, and a look of disgust spread over Kingsland's face.

"Let her have her own way," he advised gloomily. "If she'll marry him, then, then——"

"Oh, she'll marry him all right," broke in the German, "unless you stick your finger in the pie an' stop it. The poor little fool don't know a good man when she sees one. I tried to get Sliver to take Olive, seein' they're both good Germans, but Sliver says 'No.' Mebbe Jim can make a German of—of Judy-flack, an' mebbe he can't! I've tried it with my cane, but she stands like a rock, dumb with hurt, an' cussin' my King of Prussia with them blue eyes of her'n 'til I feel like gougin' 'em smack out of her head."

He paused in his tirade and lowered his voice on his next words. "I was just goin' to communicate with you about it, seein' as you was interested in 'er, for Sliver 'd like to know. Before she leaves here I'd like to change 'er notions of glory over to the only country worth standin' on the Globe—an' that's Germany, mister."

"You'd better be careful what you say," protested Kingsland, frowning. "You know we're at war with Germany, and the draft act passed yesterday."

"Mein Gott," muttered Ketchel, his withered face going gray. "What's everybody pickin' on the Fatherland for, Kingsland?"

The other man knew how useless it would be to preach patriotism to this bigoted old Prussian, so he waived the question aside by an emphatic gesture.

"Tell me more about the girl," he commanded, brusquely.

A cloud of smoke shrouded Grandfather Ketchel for a few moments. He glared angrily at his companion and muttered vicious imprecations under his breath in German.

"She's an imp of Satan, Judy is," he obeyed finally. "Sliver Jim said he heard t'other day that some one had give her a banner all covered with Stars and Stripes. If she's got it, she ain't showed it to me, by thunder! . . . She'd not dast. She's always sayin' things against Germany, sir! The nerve of the brat! . . . I beat 'er for it, but what good does it do? . . . No good, sir, not enough good to put in your eye, sir."

Kingsland didn't speak, and Ketchel flew off on another tangent.

"An' that black cat, the black runt! Well, mebbe 'tain't no runt, but it's worse! Black cats 're bad luck, I say, an' thumbin' the Bible is too! 'Tain't the thing for a girl like Judy Ketchel to do."

The whining voice died away while the speaker pulled his pipe to a glow. He grinned and sniffed and took a new start.

"Ja, Ja!—the Bible, I say. Someone give Judy one, a woman livin' in the creek house, near McKinney's. Judy Ketchel—a-readin' the Bible, a book meant for clean fingers. The Bible! . . . Rot! . . . Why, she's dog-eared that holy book 'til it looks like Olive's third reader."

Kingsland remembered the talk he'd had with this girl but yesterday but not at that time, nor since, had he considered seriously her statement about her knowledge of the Bible. He moved as if to speak, but Ketchel silenced him with a wave of his hand and went on "It's always been my opinion God Almighty don't want his Book mussed up by scum, women scum, an' that's what Judy Ketchel is, nothin' but scum!"

Instinctively Kingsland recoiled. The vicious coarseness hurt him like a physical blow. And he had exposed a young girl to this! It was forced upon him that nothing could recompense Judy Ketched for such an association. As though the penalty for his treachery were written in letters of fire on the rough boards of the kitchen walls, he saw retribution was inevitable and terrible. He tightened his clutch on his hat which had been hanging loosely in his fingers, and his heart's thumping made a noise in his ears much the same as an external sound.

"The Bible's all right in the pulpit, I say, but not in the hands of a wench like Judy," the old man added.

Kingsland got to his feet, more agitated than he had been in years. Hadn't Judy, herself, told him she wasn't good? Hadn't she thrust back to him the box of sweets he had brought her only yesterday? Drops of sweat broke out upon his face. Had he, besides stunting the growth of a brave girl-soul, condemned her body, that lithe, slender body, to vile contact with vile men? Not that, oh, God! shot through him like fire. Anything but that!

"What do you mean, Ketchel?" he cried.

"Just what I say. She's leagued with the devil, so she

is! Only last night she argued with Ollie that the time was comin’ soon for Germany’s Grand Man to topple off his throne. Where she ever learned such stuff is beyond me, save, mebbe from the woman in the haunted house, drat ’er.”

Senator Kingsland paced up and down the kitchen a few times and, when he had recovered his self-control a little, sat down again.

“You won’t be troubled with her much longer, I imagine,” he said. “If she wants to marry this farmer you spoke of, I’m willing.”

Why shouldn’t it turn out that way? Perhaps the girl wanted to marry the German. He didn’t know anything save what Ketchel had told him. If she did marry, he’d make her a present of a good farm, and Judy Ketchel would be a person of importance among her own people. He was painfully conscious of the accusing blue-eyed phantom, Ricardo, glaring at him while he tried to shake off that always invading thought that if he hadn’t deceived her mother and robbed her father, Judy Ketchel wouldn’t be here.

“May the good Gott in Himmel be praised when she’s out of this house,” grouched grandpap, “since you say I’m to have the wad of money just the same.”

“Oh, you’ll get the money if you keep your mouth shut,” Kingsland snapped impatiently. “Isn’t the girl ever coming?”

“Ja, ja, she’ll come, all right,” nodded Ketchel. “Couldn’t keep her away from this house without killin’ ’er while Denny’s here.”

The old man nodded and grinned and sniffed again. His pipe was out, and he wobbled forward and placed it upon the windowsill. He dropped back into his chair, snuggled his chin deep into his collar and went to sleep. Kingsland, occupied with his own thoughts, paid no attention until Ketchel began to talk. His sleeping voice was low and had lost every trace of its bitterness.

“Here you be, liebes mädchen,” he said plainly.

"Daddy's waitin' for you in God's land of plenty. . . . Sure, Daddy loves you an' wants you all the time."

Perhaps some movement of Kingsland's, or it might have been an extra sharp bang of the loosened tin on the roof, roused the sleeper, and as if unaware of his dreaming interlude, the old German began again in the familiar, whining snarl.

"Guess mebbe Judy 'll marry Sliver Jim. Then again, mebbe she won't! I dunno. Nobody never can tell what that brat'll do. I can tell you one thing she won't do. She won't stir from this house without Denny. Her and Sliver have awful fights about the boy's bein' left here when Jim takes Judy to his house. I've laughed at 'em 'til my sides most split,—but la-la! Mebbe you'll get a chance to know 'er, then you'll see for yourself. She's worse'n the itch, that huzzy is!"

He got up with an effort, picked up his pipe and knocked the ashes into the pan, grinned, sniffed and grinned again.

"She's always runnin' to the House of Mystery, Judy is," he rambled on, "says she learns things, an' I guess she does all right, all right."

He leaned far over and glared at Kingsland. "God-amighty me!" he ejaculated. "That house is haunted! The woman livin' in it monkey-doodles with flowers both inside the house an' out. She's a witch, an' I've told the kid so many a time, but she keeps on goin' just the same."

A slow rage began to burn within the younger man.

"And after all the money I've sent," he exploded, "you've let the child go to places of ill repute. The woman, this person living near McKinney's is bad! . . . She's a bad woman, eh?"

Grandfather lighted his pipe.

"Ja, leagued with the devil like the brat," said he. "Can't keep kind from seekin' its kind in this here world, an' that's my word on it, mister."

"Monkey-doodlin' with flowers," dinned for a few



tense moments in Kingsland's brain. Ah! The Lady of Roses! That mysterious person who had taught the lonely child that smiling was part of God's harmonious plan for a suffering world; that sending out love thoughts brought even from their hidden places the very birds of the forest. He coughed and brought himself up to a posture almost straight.

"Is the woman you speak of the one who gave the child the Bible?" he queried. "You said that, didn't you, Ketchel?"

"Ja, an 'all the rest of the high-falutin' things she's been readin' lately. One day Olive stole a book from 'er, a book tellin' lies 'bout the Kaiser, bless his holy head. I stuck the thing slap into the stove. . . . Pity all books, aye, folks too, darin' to drag a mighty house like the Hohenzollerns through muck and mire, couldn't be burnt. Good red-hot fire cleans out dirt. I'd help, I would——"

From without came to the ears of the men a girl's song. The pipe in the farmer's fingers remained suspended a moment, then was waved toward the window.

"That's her," he said, and again silence fell, but each man heard the fresh, young voice coming nearer and nearer.

"She's singing," breathed Kingsland.

"Like a frog sings," croaked Grandfather Ketchel.

"But singing just the same," said Kingsland, a little happier. Through the clapboards of the old farmhouse there drifted to him plainly,

"Look ever to Jesus, and He'll carry you through!"

"Rot!" muttered Ketchel. "Just cantin' rot! Same kind of rubbish as is talked against the Fatherland. . . . An' I want to tell you something, mister, like I've told Judy many a time—all you folks buckin' Germany'll be learnin' a lesson soon, a lesson in blood an' decayin' bones."



## CHAPTER IV

### THE HOUSE OF MYSTERY

SOME time before the opening of this story the farmers along the east shore of Lake Cayuga awoke to the fact that some one had moved into the House of Mystery. So long had the tumble-down old building at the edge of the McKinney gorge stood empty that the sight of its smoking chimneys and becurtained windows caused a nine days' wonder among them.

One desolate day in March, 1915, Sliver Jim Shuckies had seen on the front porch a woman, tall, straight and white-haired. Sliver had made it his business to inquire if anyone knew her. No one did or wanted to. The reputation of the place was so generally horrifying that none of the neighbors cared to intrude upon its tenant. Her only callers were the drivers from the Ithaca merchants, and they never went farther than the doorway. They reported that the woman bought only the best and always paid cash. Jim Shuckies told grandpap she was a stranger and well fixed.

"Why shouldn't she be?" retorted the old man. "The devil has plenty for his own."

In spite of the gossip, Judy Ketchel made her own observations. All the witches she'd ever heard of were withered and ugly and hateful, so she came to the reasonable conclusion that the devil didn't own the serene, beautiful face under the glory of white hair and that the occupant of the haunted house wouldn't hurt her, and indeed, even the house, itself, couldn't be dangerous because Mrs. Lessington was in it. When she ventured a timid advance into the garden where Honor was working, she was graciously received. After

her hostess learned the identity of her caller, Judy was made very welcome.

From that hour until this afternoon when Senator Kingsland sat with farmer Ketchel, the friendship between the woman and girl, then begun, had continued. Many times Judy had trudged the distance along the railroad tracks from the Ketchel homestead to the House of Mystery.

"Just to look at you, mam, I like you so much," she told Honor.

When Mrs. Lessington's first spring in the haunted house had given place to summer, passersby noticed the patch of ground reaching to the road and back to the edge of the gorge began to produce living things. The front yard blossomed bright with flowers, and trailing rose-vines commenced to stretch their clinging tendrils from basement to roof, their small green hands gripping a hold upon the arbor that made a sheltered pathway to the barn.

The summer of 1916 the place was transformed. Everything put into the ground throve vigorously, and the garden, though containing but the most familiar plants, was a mass of bloom against a background of rich verdure.

This, too, caused comment! Grandfather Ketchel observed with his usual sniffling grin, "Guess the old Nick knows how to make flowers grow if he wants to."

"The Garden of Glory," Judy Ketchel called it, and to the mistress of that garden, the girl had given the name, "The Lady of Roses."

At the very time Grandfather Ketchel was rehearsing Judy's bad points to the Senator from Ithaca, Honor Lessington was smiling upon the girl, rosy from her tramp through the rain.

"You've been running, darling, but, dear me, what in the world have you got on? . . . and you're all wet!"

Judy Ketchel gurgled.

"Wait!" she replied. "Wait a minute! . . . Grandpap was watchin' me so close I couldn't get my coat. . . . This I got on's only a wheat sack. It keeps off lots of rain."

She slipped off the sack like a snake slips out of its skin and left the bag on the porch. Then she stepped into the living room and closed the door.

"I had to come, rain or no rain, mam," she spoke impetuously. "I just had to. I'm always happy here. . . . I love the rain, an' wet clothes ain't nothin'. . . . I put the Poot-cat in the barn . . . an' Denny's wrapped up in his corner, an' he won't stir 'til I get back. . . . Oh, dear, grandpap hates Denny an' me so! But I guess he hates me worse'n Denny! . . . Poor granddaddy."

Honor dropped into a chair and beckoned the girl to her side.

"Something's happened—to your grandfather, sweet? Is—is he sick?"

Judy shook her head.

"Nope, he's no worse'n usual. Olive's grouchy, and grandpap——" she paused.

"Yes, yes! What about your grandfather, Judy dear?" questioned the woman.

"Oh, he's got an awful temper on 'im today. He's bad enough anytime, keepin' at me to marry Jim Shuckies. I won't, I say I won't, an I'll keep on sayin' it to my last breath! I hate the sight of Sliver, slouchin' along, but when I say it to grandpap, he flies in a fit."

Mrs. Lessington put her arm around the girl, and Judy, sighing contentedly, sank to the floor and laid her curly head against her friend's knee.

"Somehow, when the wind blows or it rains, grandpap's worse," Judy broke in. "He's only happy when he's sleepin' anyhow. When he sleeps, he dreams he's got his little girl back again, but when he's awake, an' the wind howls, he swears at 'er something awful. He says he'll kill 'er if he sees 'er. . . . Do you think he will?"

Honor Lessington had spent many long nights of anguish trying to solve this very riddle. Oh, if she knew! If she only knew!

"Perhaps he might," she returned. "How can I tell?"

An interval of silence succeeded during which they both listened to the moan of the wind through the willows, the unceasing rumble of the creek and the rain beating on the house vines.

"I read all the parts in the Bible you gave me, mam," Judy's clear voice cut through the uproar of the storm, "an' I made Denny say over the parts about lovin' because, you see, mam, Denny's such a little feller, he don't understand that sputterin' cuss-words only makes things worse when grandpap trounces me. Denny hates seein' my legs whacked, Denny does!"

Honor felt a convulsive shudder attack her from head to foot. Her hands instinctively covered the curly head as if she'd protect it from hurt if she could.

"My darling goldy-locks," she murmured.

"It's awful, ain't it?" sighed the girl. "But it's like this. Grandpap feels awful run about this country takin' sides against the Fatherland, an' when he beats me tryin' to make me say I hate it, Denny says awful swear-words, but he's so little, I guess God'll forgive 'im, don't you?"

Mrs. Lessington's arms enfolded the young speaker spasmodically. It seemed impossible to stay at home when she wanted to go to Rogues' Harbor so much. But she dared not—not yet!

"I can't seem to drive it into the baby's noodle that when he fights with grandpap over me, I get just twice as hard a lickin' as I'd get for my own badness," choked the girl. Judy's face suddenly lost its expression of tragedy. "But Denny's learnin', Denny is, only he don't grow much, poor little duffer!"

"You must bring him over to see me, sweet," interposed Mrs. Lessington, "as soon as the weather's better."

Judy nodded and smiled.

"Sure, mam, sure I will, an' he's crazy to come." She looked earnestly up into the face above her. "You'll like 'im, I bet. He's got the beautifulest eyes. Why, my goodness, sometimes Denny's eyes look like big, black patches. Like that?" She made a circle with her two forefingers and thumbs. "Like that, when he's sufferin'," she repeated, her voice low and sad. "But there, I didn't come here today to worry you . . . I come to tell you something!"

"And that?" queried the listener.

"I guess I told you before how I was learnin' Denny all about love, didn't I?"

Mrs. Lessington nodded.

"See, I carry the little Bible you gave me right here," observed Judy.

She took from her pocket a little red book and held it up.

"Tell me about what you've learned, dear," Honor requested. There was a little catch in her voice, and tears shone on her lashes. She was so helpless to bring comfort into that squalid house in Rouges' Harbor.

"Tell me, honey," she repeated.

"Well," began Judy, "I read the story where Jesus talked to the people in the mountain! All about meekness an' love, an' such like, an' every day I say over and over the things you told me to, what love'll do if I keep on thinkin' good things, but it's awful hard to be lovin' an' meek when grandpap clips me with his cane."

The tears flowed from Honor's eyes, but she brushed them away hastily.

"I know it, dear," was all she said, "but some day your grandfather will change. You see if he doesn't. Keep on loving him, and believing him just as good as he can be now, and after a while——"

A sudden memory brought a flashing bit of purple into the girl's eyes.

"You're right," she interrupted eagerly. "I know

you're right. I almost forgot to tell you what the little book did for me last Monday. Well, you know grandpap's cane?"

That awful cane! Yes, Honor knew its length and strength as well as Judy Ketchel.

"It's dreadful when he uses it," she mused, memories of other days crowding thick upon her.

"So 'tis," replied Judy, nodding, but the yellow head lifted proudly, and for a moment, the blue eyes rested upon Mrs. Lessington. "Oh, you got tears comin'! . . . Now I won't tell you any more."

Honor pressed the appealing hand thrust up to her.

"Go on, precious, please! If you don't let me help you a little, I just don't know what I'll do!"

Judy cuddled closer to the woman.

"Well, then, if you won't cry, I'll tell. . . . Promise? . . . Cross your heart, hope to die?"

"Tell me, dearest."

"Well," took up the girl once more, "you know where the little book says not a sparrow can drop without God's knowin' it or anything happen to it? . . . I suppose a sparrow means any old bird, don't it?"

An affirmative nod was her answer.

"Last Monday," continued Judy, "grandpap drove me an' Denny to the barn. I learned the kid all 'bout lovin' hard like God does. Denny an' me agreed Jesus meant every bird when he spoke about sparrows, huh?" She sighed and breathed deeply. "I love every bird in the world, I do! I guess I love birds an' the wind better'n anything God ever made besides Denny an' you an' grandpap."

"But you were telling me about your grandfather, honey," ventured Mrs. Lessington.

"Oh, yes, so I was," smiled Judy. "Well, last Monday, Ollie come home an' told grandpap, some folks way back on the hill said 'Mrs. Lessington's a witch.' Grandpap said right back to Ollie, 'Sure, she's a witch an' a shrew



an' everything bad, or she wouldn't be livin' in the haunted house.' "

Honor whitened and swayed a little.

"You crossed your heart an' hoped to die if you cried," the girl broke out.

"I'm not crying . . . Go on, dear."

"Well, then I slapped in an' said, 'Mrs. Lessington's good, grandpap, the best woman in all the world.' I up an' said you wasn't hobnobbin' with devils and dead things, ma'm, an' just while I was sayin' it over an' over, grandpap lifted his cane——"

Her long pause brought a sharp, "Well?" from the woman's trembling lips.

Judy went on.

"When grandpap's cane come clippin' around me, an' I was hoppin' up an' down, I howled out 'slood's I could, 'A sparrow can't fall without Jesus knowin' it.' . . . Why, mam, grandpap's cane fell kee-whack on the floor, an' the poor old duffer flopped down in his chair, an' his mouth fell open just like this!" Judy's two red lips parted to their widest extent, showing two rows of white teeth. "Then, then grandpap fell asleep just as if nothin' had happened an' began makin' love to his little, dead girl. You'd think when he's awake, he just hated Aunt Claudy, but when he's asleep he don't talk of anyone else, an' he speaks so nice an' kind like! Grandpap's a queer old codger, ain't he?"

She fondled the red Bible a moment, pressing it against her cheek.

"This book did it, mam," she asserted, "this very little book! Grandpap got in a few bully, good licks at me before I yelled out about the birds, an' he quit just like that, zitt, smack, like that! 'Twas this Bible that did it, mam, eh?"

"Yes, no doubt, dear," the woman agreed. She glanced at the small book the girl held up and took it in her fingers. How well she remembered the day she had given it to Judy Ketchel, hoping it might bring to

the lonely child some peace of mind. She gazed at it dreamily, thinking of the boy who had owned it. At that moment the front cover fell back, and her eyes caught a name written there. For an instant she sat staring at the fly-leaf. Her face grew livid, her lips lost their color, and a great, great fear came into her eyes.

Judy Ketchel got to her feet.

"What's the matter?" she gasped. "Oh, Lordy, but you're dyin', ain't you?" Her eyes darted to the spot that held the woman's startled gaze. "Oh! Oh! Is it that name?" She leaned toward the woman and smiled. "You needn't care about that. I just traced over the dents what was there with my pencil. 'Donald Ricardo!' . . . Why! Do you care because I done it? Oh, don't get mad at me, please don't. I just thought the name pretty—Donald Ricardo!"

"Donald Ricardo," and Honor's voice lingered over the name. Then she gathered her senses together. "Judy, darling, you must rub that out again. . . . The book belonged to a very dear friend of mine, and when I gave it to you I erased it purposely. Has anyone else seen it but you?"

Judy shook her head.

"Nope," she jerked out. "Nobody but me an' Denny, an' nobody's likely ever to see it nuther. Grandpap an' Olive's seen me readin' it, but they wouldn't touch it because——" Judy bowed her head and blushed. "Grandpap says even Bibles get devil-struck when witches touch 'em!"

Later, by five minutes, when Olive called loudly for Judy, she was standing by the table while Honor Lessington made absolutely illegible the name of Donald Ricardo on the fly-leaf of the little red Bible.

## CHAPTER V

### LOVE'S ALL BOSH

WHEN the Ketchel farmhouse door opened a little, enough for the cold spring wind to swirl in a sharp dash of rain, Senator Kingsland shivered. The sudden chill bit him sharply for his blood was thin. The back draught forced streams of wood smoke from under the lids on the warped stove-top, and Grandfather Ketchel, hunched low in his chair, permitted a look of malignant hate to spread itself over his face.

Then the figure of a young girl slipped in. The door was clapped shut, and Judy Ketchel stood with her back to it. She glanced at her grandfather with wondering gaze for a moment, then at the vacant stool in the corner. At the sight of her Senator Kingsland desired to stand, but he couldn't. He remained absolutely silent, even softening his breath, her appearance had rendered audible.

"Where's Denny?" demanded the girl, a sudden, sullen glitter coming into her eyes.

"Out in the barn along with the cats, spawn of the devil!" snarled Ketchel. "Say, every time you open that door, you let in wind enough to kill the heat in a cord of wood."

To Kingsland's horror, the young girl seemed to find nothing out of the ordinary in the old farmer's greeting.

"Ollie said you wanted me, grandpap," was all she said.

The musical voice touched a responsive chord in the Senator's memory, and the eyes, hair, and straight, young figure reminded him, as they had yesterday, of one he'd gladly forget, but could not.

Ketchel lifted his cane and pointed at the other man.

"Nein! . . . It's him what wants you," the farmer snarled.

Slowly Judy's eyes traveled the length of the lithe stick and rested on Roderick Kingsland. Her friend! Her heart leapt up at the sight of him. Oh, how much she had thought about him in the past few hours, and all that day, her imagination had played with the thought that perhaps after a great many tomorrows she would see him. And now there he sat in grandpap's kitchen just as if he belonged there. During the moment it took for her to recognize him, she remembered like a flash that she had dreamed about him last night, dreamed that he'd suddenly appeared before her, smiling as she'd seen him smile in the fodder field. The wonder of her dream's fulfillment held her silent and motionless.

"What you starin' at?" grandpap barked at her. "Ain't you got no manners?"

Thrilled to the tips of her fingers, Judy made an awkward little curtsy.

Kingsland found a certain relief in seeing her again, this living likeness of the blue-eyed boy, remorse had made his companion,—this girl who had forced him from his Ithaca mansion at Kingsland Court to Rogues' Harbor, the girl Herman Ketchel had reiterated "was leagued with the devil," and who huddled the wild things and loved the wind.

Surely at that moment she looked primeval enough to be anything that might be said of her. Her dress hung in wet folds about slender, brown legs. Her arms were bare below the elbows, and the yellow hair, he had particularly noticed the day before, curled about her shoulders in rain-soaked ringlets. Even more than yesterday, when, under the canopy of Heaven she had summoned from the pine trees the "birdies," as she, herself, had called that darkling mob of the fowls of the air, did she recall Donald Ricardo.

Some emotion unfamiliar and certainly unsought surged in the city man's soul. In former days, yes, he

must admit, only yesterday morning he had staunchly declared that might, power and position were the most desirable possessions in the world. He had them all, and he'd keep them too! So he vowed yesterday. Great God! Now it seemed as if all those things were worthless, and for the moment, he, like the old German there, crouched back in his chair.

How cold his feet were, and his hands felt like pieces of marble as he pressed them together nervously. Palsy took possession of him. Ricardo's ghost arrayed in its dull, unearthly color stood side by side with the startled girl.

Apathetically, Kingsland noticed the blue of her eyes was like the sheen of costly satin. In striking harmony, hung the masses of gold over her shoulders. Why that demanding expression in the girl's steady, blue gaze? A long time ago, a boy had looked at him just so.

If the shaking man had known Judy's thoughts, he wouldn't have felt as he did. She was thinking of a box of candy. He was conscious only of the Kingsland millions—millions that hung heavy on his hands, millions that belonged to her. Well, she should have them back and all he'd made out of them besides.

This resolution caused the ghost-boy to fade through the closed kitchen door and—and he was gone! But instantly into the Senator's mind came Peter, the wonderful, Peter so proud of the Kingsland name, so profligate in his habits and yet—he couldn't leave Peter penniless. There was Sarah and Teddy too. He must make some compromise with himself, with the girl there. The phantom boy drifted out from the door panels and halted beside Judy in spectral majesty. The pain in the man's heart became so severe that he clutched at his side, endeavoring to hold the agony in check. This time he might die! Hadn't David Carmen warned him against great excitement? He wanted to die, to rest, to forget. He almost hoped that in a few moments he would be done with it all!

"Leagued with the devil," ran through his mind during the time it took him to draw four, long, gasping breaths. Here, before him, was a personality, some one to force from him a reckoning for his misdeeds. Oh, God! To go back and live his life over! To be at rest for the remainder of his days! But for that to be, he had to tell that girl by the kitchen door how he had destroyed in one bitter year her girl-mother, her boy-father!

Instantly he realized that it was not Grandfather Ketchel he feared but Judy Ketchel, the bird-girl. He grew grey with fright when he imagined her rage and despair. His eyes caught sight of one long yellow curl flung over Judy's bare brown arm, and he breathed a little easier. In its color was the yellow warmth of the sun, and then, just then, he noted in her cheek a dimple like that of a pretty child. Although she was looking at him steadfastly, her lips were wreathing a smile. It was that smile which sent the pain from his side, and he straightened up. Her eyes were no longer blue, but a limpid purple, soft, glowing, like the petals of a pansy. All at once Kingsland felt life again warm within him. He made a gesture toward her, his long, white hand almost touching her skirt.

"I—I knew you'd come back," she hesitated, "an' so you're here!"

"Yes, I'm here," answered Kingsland.

Judy drew a long breath, but did not move from the door.

"'Twas lovely of you to come so soon," she told him. "I said to Olive just now, 'Whose blustering, big motor car is that standing at the top of the lane,' and Olive said smack back to me, 'None of your business, Miss sassy. Go on in. Grandpap yants you! . . . But I didn't have no hopes of seein' you.'"

Roderick Kingsland experienced a sense of ease and freedom. The phantom boy had vanished, absorbed somehow by the smiling girl.

Then Grandfather Ketchel bent forward and whirled



his cane in Judy's direction, and the radiant expression disappeared from her face. She moved a little to avoid it, and the slender stick fell back to the floor.

If Senator Kingsland noticed the old man's action and the girl's half-conscious avoidance of it, he chose to ignore it. He lifted himself to his feet. What prompted his action was the desire to repay her in some way for the cruel treatment to which he'd exposed her.

Her head drooped forward, all the glory of her yellow hair falling about the twitching, lovely face.

"I thought mebbe you'd forget all 'bout me," she breathed wistfully.

"Well, you see, I haven't," replied Kingsland, trying to speak at ease.

Forget her when a dead man, her counterpart in line and coloring, haunted his every waking hour and darkened his every dream?

"Perhaps, after a while," he suggested, "you may come to Ithaca. Would you like that?"

An alert expression swept over Judy's face. Dread wiped the purple from her eyes, and she flashed a look at her grandfather.

"Ithaca," she faltered. "Grandpap hates Ithaca!"

"Ithaca," repeated Ketchel, with a deep growl. "Ja, I do hate it. It's the place where everybody goes to find hell! Where Olive's dad got 'is death blow! Where my boy, Bill Ketchel, drunk himself to death!" He fumbled for his cane, got up and shook it at Judy. "You'll not go there if I can hinder it, you rat!"

And Kingsland dared not venture a word. All he could do was to watch the youth fade from the flower face and quivering lines stretch their length from sensitive nose to sensitive mouth.

As the joy-light grew dim in the girl's eyes, the reflection of his own guilty remorse seemed to take form beside her again. The Senator perceived then he must make Judy Ketchel happy! That was the way to win his own freedom! He must take her out of this

place! But the thought of Peter across the sea brought his teeth together fiercely. Peter would never forgive him! Never, never! He might better be haunted to his grave than be separated always from Peter!

Judy left the door and came toward him a couple of steps. Her brain was alive with a hope, unexpressed in her face. This good man didn't know how much she had reckoned on his coming again, nor how anxiously she had desired to go someday beyond the curve of the winding lake road leading to the city. Ithaca meant work for her, more food for Denny, happiness for them both, but—but—grandpap had said she couldn't go. Well, then, of course she couldn't! But just because her grandfather disliked the valley town and everyone in it, was no reason why she should. She never could really hate anything ever any more, not even Sliver Jim. Faintly, like a single candle's light in the gray of the dusk, a timid smile took its place about her downcast mouth. She seized Kingsland's hand and gripped it with all her young strength.

"Ain't there any love at all in Ithaca?" she panted beseechingly.

The very touch of her seemed to renew the man's courage. Vitality from the strong, brown hands electrified him.

"Love," he echoed, "of course, of course," but Grandfather Ketchel's laugh checked the rest of his words.

The old man sagged forward on his cane and glared at them both. His face, out-thrust, bore a malignant sneering leer.

"Love," he mocked. "All the brat thinks of is love." He grinned and sniffed and lifted the cane again, but this time he did not shake it at Judy. A thought went through the girl's mind. Was it possible he was afraid of the tall stranger? But grandpap's next movement disillusioned her. He tapped his pipe on the tin pan as

he always did when enraged. Then he dropped back into his chair and continued:

"Get your mind off all this love business, Miss Judy-flack. I hate mawkish, maudling nonsense, I do, an' I won't have no more of it in my house. I've told you so a hundred times, if I've told you once. I've said lots of times you're spoilin' Denny, an' I've over and over told it to you 'bout that black barn-cat too, an' now, I'm repeatin' it about Ithaca. . . . Love! Love in Ithaca! Love's all bosh!"

His old head bobbed forward, and the red-rimmed lids fell drowsily. Almost instantly he slept, his cane slipping to the floor beside his chair.

## CHAPTER VI

### I'LL DO WHAT I CAN

"GRANDPAP'S gone to sleep," Judy whispered. "Poor, dear old grandpap . . . Now, now he's happy!"

She took her hand from Kingsland's and went forward stealthily to Ketchel's side.

"Let him sleep," undertoned Kingsland. "I want to talk to you."

Judy nodded as she picked up an old shawl.

"Sure, I wouldn't wake 'im for a farm bigger'n this one," she responded, "but I got to cover 'im up. He'll get pains if I don't. . . . He's only happy when he dreams."

Carefully she spread the shawl over the crouching old man.

"It's so chilly when it rains," she explained, walking softly back. "He'd take cold sleepin' uncovered. Grandpap can fall asleep quicker'n the Poot-cat can wink. Then he dreams he's got his little girl back, an' that he loves to live in America. Of course you never knew grandpap's girl—Aunt Claudy!"

Miserably, Roderick Kingsland gazed into Ricardo's accusing blue eyes which seemed to glare at him through the soft purple of Judy's, and shook his head as if she'd asked a question instead of making a statement.

"The worst of it is," she went on softly, "when he wakes up, he hates this country an' talks all the time for Germany. I guess Aunt Claudy was the only person grandpap ever liked clean through and through."

How pretty she looked just then in the simplicity of her poverty. Kingsland extended his hands eagerly toward her. The youth in her thrilled his cold,

aristocratic heart as it hadn't been thrilled in years. Never before had the warmth of universal love flowed into his selfish soul.

"Schönes mädchen," mumbled Grandfather Ketchel. "I'll get y' yet. I'm comin' baby—daddy's girl——" His mutterings trailed off into an indistinguishable whisper.

Judy turned and looked at the drooping figure in the wooden chair.

"Poor old grandpap," she sighed. Then she smilingly drew Kingsland slowly backward. "Please set again. . . . You can talk just as well sittin' as standin'. You don't look real husky yourself."

Senator Kingsland accepted her invitation and motioned her to sit beside him. He wanted her near him—wanted to see the dimples in the rounded cheeks play hide away and then flash back again with encircling flushes of crimson. She was not quite the same as yesterday when he'd found her with the birds. She seemed older, but he realized the change came from her close proximity to the sleeping German there.

"Now tell me what you'd like to do," he inquired almost brusquely.

Judy considered a moment.

"I want to work," she answered simply. "I want some money for grandpap. He's spent a lot on Denny an' me . . . You see, you see, he'll always have Olive on his hands because she's lame." Lowering her voice, she went on quickly, "I guess mebbe I could go to work an' leave Denny because grandpap ain't quite so dirt-mean as he used to be."

"But now you get two beatings when Denny would get but one!" thrust in Kingsland, his ears burning at the thought.

Judy made an upward gesture with her head.

"Never mind that," she rejoined hastily, "Denny's the only one counts in this here house to me besides my grandfather. An' every day grandpap's losin' ground,

~~what with~~ gettin' in tempers over the—the Fatherland an'—an'—me. My heart's near broke! It hurts me so awful every day, I got to do something."

Senator Kingsland shot a swift glance at Ketchel, and noticing he still slept, he took up hurriedly.

"I'll do what I can," he promised.

A glowing sense of gratitude took possession of Judy Ketchel. Why should this tall, dignified stranger say he'd help her! But she so wanted a little chance to do something in the world that tears glistened on the long lashes lifted over the blue eyes.

"Oh, I'd thank you, sir, I would—I do, anyway," she ejaculated. "You're sure a good old soul at that! I'm tellin' you the truth when I say you're the best ever, an' most kids with my kind of blood in 'em wouldn't dare say it! Good German brats 're against Yankee mutts. I ain't, though—I love 'em! So there!"

A sigh from the corner, and the young speaker turned around.

"Grandpap's still sleepin'," she explained. "He's awful happy!"

"Claudy's comin' home to daddy," interjected grandfather Ketchel.

Kingsland felt a swift pain twist about his heart. That name, Claudie, came to his lips as if he intended repeating it. But he didn't!

"Do you know my name, little Judy," he asked instead.

She shook her head.

"Nope, you forgot to tell me yesterday."

No, he hadn't forgotten to tell her yesterday who he was because then he hadn't intended to come to Rogues' Harbor again. A sigh escaped him.

"My dear," he said in a whisper, "I'm Roderick Kingsland, of Kingsland Court, Ithaca. You'll remember if—if you need me at any time?"

Judy bobbed her yellow head.

"I'll remember . . . an' you're awful kind!"



Kingsland bent over her.

"You needn't tell your grandfather I told you my name, nor—nor anyone else!" the words slipped out between his teeth.

Before she had a chance to answer him, Grandfather Ketchel stirred, and Judy snatched her hands from Kingsland's. When she glanced at grandpap he was poking tobacco into his pipe, getting it ready to light.

Kingsland rose to his feet.

"Goin' back to Ithaca, I s'pose," Ketchel sniffed, then a forceful, terrible grin distorted his features. "My girl's somewhere down there, I s'pose, drat 'er, if she ain't dead," he growled. "Well, wait 'til I get her, I'll fix 'er, see if I don't."

The contrast between the love and longing he'd expressed unconsciously and the devilish hatred in his deliberate threat appalled Kingsland. He wanted to leave, to go home, to think out some way to help the miserable child in front of him. He certainly felt better for his offer and definite determination to help her had relieved the pain.

Ketchel's repeating his question, "Goin' back to Ithaca," brought forth Kingsland's quick retort. "Yes, certainly, yes! Immediately!"

He thrust his hand into his pocket, and when he took it out again, it wasn't empty. He turned to Judy.

"Here's something for you, my dear. Get whatever you want for yourself." He looked at the old man and frowned. "For herself, you understand, Ketchel?"

How his conscience had stabbed him, even more today than yesterday, at the sight of her shabby clothes! But he'd make it all up to her in some way. No feasible plan had yet come to him. Judy put her hands behind her back.

"I couldn't take money from you, sir," she protested shyly. "I ain't forgot about the candy yesterday—but money's different!"

Again Kingsland became painfully conscious of the

phantom Ricardo. She wouldn't take money from him, eh? Her own money! Oh, to tell her! To have done with all his misery! As far as Teddy was concerned, he felt secure, but Peter, and Sarah! Especially Peter!

"Don't you wish to please me?" he demanded almost curtly.

Judy colored deeply, and her white lids lowered.

"Yep, sure I do. I sure do!"

"Then take this!"

Putting forth her hand timidly Judy took the money.

"I'll see you again very soon," he promised and walked to the door. "And now,"—there was that pain in his side again,—he could only add, "May—may God bless you, child!"

With a curt good afternoon to Grandfather Ketchel, Senator Kingsland opened the door and went out.

## CHAPTER VII.

### DENNY

JUDY KETCHEL stood as one in a trance, only her mind working rapidly. She thought of Honor Lessington in her cottage in the Garden of Glory and remembered all her friend had told her. Her hand touched the pocket where her little red book was. After all love was going to help her join the world's workers. That mysterious, all active love Honor so often spoke of was on the very eve of doing something for Denny. Her fingers hung loosely to the roll of bills; her soul soared away to the land of independence. At a sound she turned, and Grandfather Ketchel was looking at her in a strange, curious way, pallid to his thready grey hair. Startled at his expression, she went toward him but halted when the old man's arm lifted his cane.

"Mebbe he'll get me something to work at," she broke in gravely, "an' then I'll give you some money. This," she held up the roll of bills, "this I'm goin' to spend on Denny."

As if the sound of his name had brought him out of nowhere, the boy opened the door a little and slipped in, wet and shivering. His sister put out a trembling hand and drew him to her side.

"Stay by me, Denny," she said, sharply.

Too angry to sit still, farmer Ketchel rose from his chair. He rapped his pipe so many times on the edge of the pan, Judy knew it augured badly for her and her brother. Again the window ledge received the old clay pipe, but the girl remained perfectly still, one hand holding the money and the other gripping Denny's shoulder. Then Ketchel dragged himself slowly toward

her. There was menace, hatred, almost murder in his faded, red-rimmed eyes.

"Gimme that money, Judy-flack," he commanded huskily.

With a glance at the boy, shrinking into the folds of her skirt, Judy retreated another step. Her fingers closed tightly on the roll in her palm. She flashed her grandfather a terrified glance.

"No," she refused, trying to speak calmly. "No, I'd like to get Denny some things, a suit—an' some shoes."

The boy clutched at her frantically.

"Judy darlin'," he entreated, and once more in the same compelling tones, she ordered,

"Stay here! Nobody's goin' to hurt you, honey."

She kept her eyes on the twitching old man, who was shuffling in his worn slippers across the board floor in her direction. When within two feet or so of her, he raised his cane. Grandfather knew Judy dreaded the stinging blows he dealt her daily.

"Gimme that!" again came from between his thin lips.

Obstinately Judy shook her head.

"No," she reiterated. "No, he gave it to me! I'm goin' to keep it for Denny. Cane me if you like, I don't care."

She moved slowly backward toward the stove, drawing the child along at her side. Ah, but Grandfather Ketchel knew how to get his way! He thrust forth his hand and jerked the boy from her before she had guessed his purpose. Then Judy realized what he intended to do with that uplifted stick. She made a quick move to catch it in her hand, but it came down and struck Denny squarely across the back. He uttered a long, terrified cry. The roll of bills dropped from the girl's hand to the floor. She lifted the screaming, writhing child into her arms and stood with flashing eyes fixed upon the old man's evil face. With Denny's fingers fastened in her hair, she took two steps forward, her face wax white.

"If you hit him again, I'll kill you," she gritted.

"Poor little Denny! . . . Poor baby Denny! . . . Don't cry,—don't cry, please, honey. . . . I didn't think he'd do it! Oh, God, I didn't! He promised he wouldn't. I thought 'twas me he were goin' to beat—me! . . . There,—there!"

She put quite a space between her grandfather and herself.

"Don't hit 'im again, grandpap," she flared up, "I don't know what'll happen if you do."

"You'd best shut up," growled the farmer. "An' if you got any wish for the brat's good, shut him up too!"

Denny screamed louder than ever, and grandpap, quite beside himself with rage, tottered into the space Judy had yielded.

"I'll fix that brat if he don't quit his bawlin'," grated Ketchel.

The second time the cane whirled its cruel way across the space between them. To shield the child, Judy bent double and caught the blow across her shoulders.

"Pick up that money, an' hand it to me," snorted Ketchel, and terrified, she stooped and picked up the bills.

"Fork 'em over," the old man continued, "an' you're to fetch me any other money what's given you—every time!"

Deliberately Judy straightened herself, cast a long glance on the passion-drawn old face and handed over the money. No sign of mercy for Denny or for her met her gaze, but bravely she attempted another bargain.

"Will you keep your hands off'n Denny if I do?" she questioned.

Grandfather Ketchel clutched the bills.

"If you're given any more, bring it to me," he snarled, and he lifted his cane suggestively. "You hear me, don't you?"

Denny's cries were less ear-splitting now, but even yet his sobs threatened to tear the frail body to pieces.

"But about Denny, granddaddy?" Judy persisted.

The old German took a step toward her, the expression of his face even more baleful than it had been a moment before.

"Yep, grandpap," she promised, "I'll bring it to you! Only don't hit Denny again!"

"Keep 'im out of my way then," Ketchel grumbled. "You both got what you asked for."

When he had tucked the bills into his pocket, he shuffled back toward his chair and picked up his pipe.

"I'll learn you, Judy-flack," he sneered.

At that moment the door opened, and a tall, thin, young man with light hair, his furtive eyes taking in the situation at a glance, stepped into the kitchen.

"What's the matter?" he inquired as he slammed the door. "It sounded from the road 's if a hog-killin' party was a goin' on."

Grandfather Ketchel lumbered down into his chair.

"That's what it were, Sliver," he grinned. "Set down and draw up!" and grandpap sniffed and grinned again.



## CHAPTER VIII

### "I WON'T MARRY ANY DUFFER"

ANOTHER enemy, even more dangerous than grandpap, had appeared upon the scene. Sliver Jim's coming only multiplied Judy's difficulties and anxieties.

Ever since she had been fourteen years old, Shuckies had been forcing his attentions upon her. Grandfather Ketchel favored the young farmer's suit too, and between them they had made her life as miserable as a girl's could be. She'd had to fight to defend herself, and many were the bites and scratches Sliver had received during his tempestuous courtship. The kind of thing a cat loves to do to a mouse, Jim was continually doing to Denny, and every instinct in Judy's being rose in open revolt against his brutal treatment of her brother.

Silent and watchful, she stood rigidly upright, her eyes following the young farmer to grandfather's chair. When the two men shook hands, she hid the pang that grip of fingers sent quivering through her. It was as though two strong forces were uniting against little Denny.

The young German seated himself and drew his pipe from his pocket.

"Been doin' a little disciplinin', grandpap?" he asked jovially.

"Ja," replied Ketchel, sniffing. "Have to once in a while. Judy-flack's that cussed ugly——"

A loud guffaw slid from Sliver Jim's lips, bringing with it a stream of smoke.

"An' you took the wise way to break that ugly spirit, eh?" he chuckled. "A man has to handle women an' brats with a stick sometimes."

He cast a knowing look at the blue-eyed girl and dropped a veined lid over a light eye in a wicked wink. Judy knew he was exulting at her misery. To cause pain, even to see another experience it, always pleased Sliver Jim. She glared at him with burning revulsion.

"You had company?" he inquired presently, turning to grandpap.

Judy drew in a quick breath of relief. The attention of both men was turning to something besides the boy, almost hidden in her skirts. She wanted time to think of a plan to get him out of the room. She backed softly into the corner, seated herself on a stool and pulled her brother to her lap.

"You had company?" observed Sliver Jim, once more.

"Ja," was Ketchel's non-committal answer.

On his way to Rogues' Harbor, Shuckies had caught sight of the large, black automobile at the top of the lane above the Ketchel farmhouse. He had paused in the field and contemplated it a few minutes. He had that day made a resolution, and the sight of the luxurious car only deepened it. He was going to marry Judy Ketchel and that right soon. He wouldn't stand any more of her monkeying.

There were two reasons why he desired to marry the girl. One was that he wanted her for his woman—the other reason had to do with a secret that lay buried in the breast of Grandfather Ketchel, a secret connecting Judy Ketchel somehow with the letters the old man received every month. Those letters breathed money to Jim Shuckies. Sliver had two gods—Judy Ketchel and money. In possessing the first, he believed he'd obtain the second, although he had no surety of the fact.

Many times he had tried to trick Herman Ketchel into some position where he would be forced to give his confidence about the well-sealed missives, but so far the doddering old German had never uttered a word. Even in his fitful slumber, he talked of nothing but the little

girl he'd lost long ago. Shuckies knew that story by heart, and his lip curled as he thought of it.

Some folks were always pursuing shadows, and grandpap was the chief of these. Jim had no doubt but that Claudia Ketchel was dead.

He congratulated himself, though, upon having accomplished something. Through Herman Ketchel and the men who had slipped into the old man's kitchen under cover of the night and the fog, he had learned the paths of the Silent City which lay west of Ithaca; he knew the hidden hold-outs where the fellows lurked when the police wanted them, and he realized exultantly that in the war the United States had just declared on the Fatherland he would be of immense value to the cause of Germany.

His keen glance about the kitchen rested an instant upon the girl in the corner and then swung back to grandpap.

"Seems things in this house ain't quite like they should be just after havin' some one rich in it!" he remarked, a wide smile showing his crooked teeth.

"Was he rich now, Sliver?" croaked grandpap. "That's funny! . . . I wonder!"

Shuckies narrowed his light eyes.

"Whoever he was," he said in an ugly tone, "he come in a motor car. He was all mushed up in a raincoat, so I couldn't tell who 'twas!"

Grandpap sniffed over his pipe bowl. He wanted to make an explanation of Kingsland's presence that would give his questioner no hint of the truth.

"Mebbe you saw a duffer, thin as a lath—an' tall as a tree?" he queried.

The young farmer crossed his legs but kept a steady eye on Ketchel.

"That was him," he replied moodily.

Grandpap grinned and blinked his eyes.

"Then you didn't see much," he chuckled. "Lean over here, Jim."

Shuckies bent forward, and, unmindful of Judy and the boy in the corner, the old man said in German,

"He come to tell me they passed the draft yesterday, makin' every young feller fight against the Fatherland. . . . Didn't you hear it somewheres?"

"Ja, heard it today at the over hill store, Herman. Bad times comin' for some folks, but they can't touch me. My truck farm'll keep me home just as well as a wife and young ones."

Then closer the young German drew his chair to that of the old German, but of what they spoke, Judy neither heard nor cared. She was figuring for a way to get Denny upstairs without attracting either man's attention. Grandpap had broken the promise he'd kept more than two years. Her thin, shriveled brother had felt the weight of his cane, and when the old man was in his present frame of mind, it was best not to be remembered by him. She wondered vaguely about Olive and wished she would come in. Olive wasn't afraid of Grandfather Ketchel, and while Judy knew the lame girl disliked both Denny and herself, she also knew Olive would manage to keep Jim by her side. The boy was sagging against his sister almost a deadweight. She didn't want him to go to sleep, so she put her lips close to his ear, "Denny," she whispered.

Neither of the men heard her, and she softly murmured once more, "Denny!"

"Huh? What?" came in a breath from the child.

"Darlin'," she breathed, "I'm goin' to take you up to bed, an' you mustn't say a word no matter how much you hurt! After a while I'll bring you somethin' to eat."

"Aw right," Denny returned softly.

Judy got up quietly and let the boy slide to the floor. This was accomplished without a sound. Then she began a mouse-like creep along the wall toward the stairway. Grandpap and Sliver Jim were excitedly talking in German. Some of the words came to the girl with

understanding, but the conversation in the main went completely over her head. She had almost reached the wooden stairway when grandpap's voice rasped forth in English,

"Where you goin', whelps?"

They halted instantly, Denny clinging to Judy's skirt. She threw an entreating glance at her grandfather, and one at Shuckies. Sliver Jim's reply was a slow grin. His eyelids gathered together, rimming the glassy eyes that looked like pale grey china.

"I was just goin' to take Denny to bed," faltered Judy, a nameless dread flooding her with terror. "I mean upstairs for a while. . . . Can't I, grandpap?" She put the question tremulously. She was desperately anxious he should give his consent.

"Drop the brat an' come here a minute," snarled the old man.

To obey him was the only thing left to do. She whispered a few words into Denny's ear and, leaving him, went forward to the middle of the kitchen.

"What do y' want?" she grumbled sulkily.

Sliver turned his chair about and faced her.

"I asked you what you was goin' to do?" growled Ketchel.

"An' I said I was goin' to take Denny upstairs, grandpap," replied Judy, gulping. "He's so little, an' you promised never to hit 'im, an'——"

Ketched interrupted her by stretching out his cane and tapping it several times on the floor.

"Stand there," he ordered. "There, right there, Judy-flack!"

She stepped into the place indicated and waited. Grandfather puffed his pipe in silence for a few minutes. Sliver Jim did likewise.

"You happen to know what's come about today, huzzy?" growled Ketchel.

Judy shook her head. All she knew was that grand-

pap's cane had stung Denny to tears, and that was enough for her, far too much.

Ketchel made a movement as if to get up, and Judy increased the distance between them by two or three short, backward steps.

"Speak when I ask you a thing," snapped the farmer, sinking back.

"I dunno anything!" answered Judy, even more sulkily than before. "How can I know when you don't tell me?"

"Then speak when you're spoken to," commanded her grandfather, "an' don't stand there blue-eyein' me, or I'll whale you, see? . . . You'll have some job tamin' 'er, Sliver, when you get 'er."

The last statement was made to Shuckies in German. Jim grunted and nodded his head, casting a longing look at the bare-footed girl. His eyes contracted to angry slits in the course of his close scrutiny. He decided she was as lovely in pale gravity as when smiling. The longing for her became an unendurable sting. If he'd dared, he'd have sprung at her and wrecked his will upon her. But something in the tall, slight, haughty girl kept his desire within bounds. How very white she looked, standing there, her young shoulders thrown back, her head up and her eyes blazing, bluer than any blue he'd ever seen. To relieve his intensity, he laughed, and his laugh brought Judy's darting blue glance upon him, and the awful expression on her face killed his nervous mirth before it was half-expended. The ugly look settled again on his face.

At length,

"Do y 'know your cussed Stars and Stripes country is 'drafting' all the men into the war against the blessed Fatherland?" stormed Ketchel.

Judy swayed and shook her head.

"Nope," was all she said.

"Well, it's true," broke in Sliver Jim. "Now mebbe you'll say you're glad."



A snarl like that of a mad dog belched from Grandfather Ketchel's lips.

"Let 'er say *that*," he gasped, "an' I'll cut 'er tongue out."

The girl only grew whiter. Once she cast a sly, backward look at the child, leaning very pale against the wall, but instantly her gaze came back to the old —German. For many painful moments there was no sound in the kitchen but the intermittent puffs on the pipes of the men and the pelting raindrops on the small windows. Judy stood as if carved out of stone, and the little boy was so terribly quiet he seemed but a part of the wall. Then Grandfather Ketchel took his pipe from his mouth and struck it several times on the tin pan, those ominous taps that always terrified Judy Ketchel.

Being very young and very ignorant, she had never contemplated just what war meant, that is, war among nations. Apathetically she had heard grandpap gush forth his invectives against the enemies of the Fatherland. Vaguely had she considered France, England, and other countries, but the young men of Rogues' Harbor going to war against Germany was more capable of comprehension. She thought of the flag upstairs, marked with the stars, and oblonged with the stripes. The thought brought a rush of blood to her face as in imagination she heard David Carmen's voice explain the glory of it. Honor Lessington, too, had told her what it meant to the world to be freed from German rule, free from those who exalted the Fatherland. Why, that meant freedom from Jim Shuckies, freedom for her and Denny!

This rapturous idea left her because grandpap was rapping even louder on the tin tobacco pan. Then he surprised her by filling his pipe after those portentous tappings. That had never happened before. What did grandpap mean by that? Why was he keeping her standing there? What was he going to do?

She thought of Senator Roderick Kingsland with his

high-bred face, and her mind droned over his name, adding Kingsland Court, Ithaca, New York. If he were only here, would he, could he do something for the baby?

She didn't dare turn and look at Denny. How much, how very much she wanted to flash him an encouraging smile, but grandpap's face and Sliver Jim's scowl kept her eyes rigidly fixed in front of her.

A match flared red in grandpap's hand, and his quick, nervous pulls on his pipe sent out numerous little puffs of smoke which slowly dissolved in the murky air of the kitchen. It flashed through Judy Ketchel's mind as she stood waiting that never had her heart thumped so hard, nor her flesh tightened together in so many prickly places—no, not even when his cane was marking her slender legs.

Now he was going to speak. He blinked his eyes and settled back in his chair.

"You say you didn't know that war was declared, Miss," he began slowly. "Well, if you didn't know that, did you know you're goin' to marry Sliver Jim, mebbe next week?"

The girl grew even more rigid. A blow from the cane would have been less unwelcome than these words.

"Did you know it?" insisted grandpap.

"No," faltered Judy.

"Well, now you know it, you can make up your mind what day it'll be," grinned Ketchel. "Before another week's gone by, you'll be Jim's wife."

Judy heard a little sob, scarcely more than a breath, from Denny, but she dared not turn.

"Jim's doin' more'n I'd do," continued grandpap, in his drawling tones, "marryin' a girl, refusin' to stand by the Fatherland. . . . You impudent huzzy, how dare you glare at me with them blue eyes of your'n? If Sliver didn't need 'em for his mendin', I'd poke my cane clean through 'em an' out the other side."

He raised his cane, but Jim's hand came up quickly and took hold of it.

"I can lick my own woman, Ketchel," said he, *gruffly*. "That's my business! . . . I'll have my hands more'n full, I s'pose, what with makin' Judy say she'll leave Denny here."

Another little sob came from the stairway, and at this Judy flung around. The strung-up tension of her nerves could bear no more. If she had really known it would insure happiness for her thin little brother to marry Shuckies, she wouldn't have hesitated a moment, but full well she knew what would happen to Denny if she gave in an inch. Hadn't she fought off Sliver Jim's hatred of the child for two years?

"I'll not leave 'im," she broke out, sharply. Denny's mine. Where I go, Denny goes. . . . Where Denny stays, I stay."

In less time than it takes to tell it she was back near the door which led upstairs.

Two spidery hands caught at her dress, and she backed against the boy as if to give him all the protection of her vital, young body.

"Come back here," growled farmer Ketchel.

Realizing that disobedience would mean more agony for Denny, Judy went forward, but this time she drew him along with her. She looked first at Ketchel, then at Shuckies.

"I've said I wouldn't leave Denny, an' I won't," she ejaculated. "There ain't no law in this land forcin' a girl to get married 'gainst her will, an' I don't intend to marry you, Jim, or any other duffer. . . . So put that in your pipe, an' smoke it."

Her voice had raised on the last words, and crimson flames of outraged blood surged to and fro in her angry face.

"You'll marry me just the same," answered Jim, setting a gaze upon her that made fear leap alive in her heart as if a hand were tearing it out of her body. "You see, Judy, you been so all-fired uppity lately, a fellow couldn't get near enough to tell you what's

what! But now you got to listen! . . . You was born of good German folks. You got a fine old granddaddy, an' you ain't never had the sense to know which side your bread's buttered. You been meaner'n dirt to everybody belongin' to you, mean to Ollie—not as that matters much—but mean to your grandpap here. . . . Now I'm goin' to teach you manners. It'll take some time mebbe, but when I'm done with you there won't be any more back talk from you."

Judy felt frozen to the bone at Jim's long accusation. She knew it to be unjust, yet, for Denny's sake, she dared make no protest against it. She felt then, as she often had in a blinding storm, when the gales of winter shook her fiercely, buffeted and confused.

"You'll marry Jim all right," thrust in grandpap, "an' now, miss, what I want to know is this. Have you got a flag with a lot of stars on it an' stripes too? If you have, go get it, an' bring it here!"

Judy stood very still. She looked as if she hadn't understood a word her grandfather had said. Olive then had told grandpap or Jim, perhaps, about her precious flag.

"Oh, you know what I mean," cried Ketchel, making as if to rise, "the rag you got at the haunted house. Get it, I say! . . . Leave the brat here, an' get it."

"It's upstairs," the girl stated. "I'll get it if Denny can go up with me."

Before she could make a move, Jim's long arm swung out and snatched hold of the boy. Denny shrieked and tried his small utmost to resist. Only the fury of a wild beast could have surpassed Judy Ketchel at that moment. No tigress ever fought for its young like she did then. Fingernails, teeth, loud screams, all were used on Sliver Jim's brute body; but 'twas like a very small force trying to overcome some gigantic mass. The more she fought, the more Jim struck out at her, until at length, because she feared Denny would

be torn to pieces, she released her hold upon him and sank back.

"I hate you Sliver," she screamed, "as long as I live, I'll hate you."

She sent a blazing glance upward as if to plunge it not only through the boards of the farmhouse but up to the rain-clouds and on beyond the blue where the Lady of Roses had said God sat in his Heavens. Her arms, too, were upflung in passionate appeal.

"May God, an' Jesus, Holy Ghost an' all of you see to it, there ain't one damned German left in the hull world when the war's done."

This was Judy Ketchel's prayer, brought forth by a dreadful hurt she'd seen heaped on a baby's slender, sensitive body.

Jim was clutching Denny's right arm tightly, and the child, terrified almost to insensibility, made no effort to release himself.

Grandfather Ketchel, too, laid aside his pipe and grasped Denny's left arm. A shudder ran through the little boy's frame, and his large dark eyes sent an imploring glance toward his sister.

"Get that flag," growled Ketchel, turning Denny's arm slowly backward until a shrill cry fell from the child's lips.

Judy sprang forward frantically.

"I'll get it, grandpap," she burst forth. "But don't do that again! . . . Don't do that! . . . I'll do what you say!"

"Then get it," ordered grandpap, once more.

Terrible insistence rang in his every word, and more terrible did he seem as his little eyes, blood-red from excitement, shot gleams of wrath at her. Wild with apprehension, Judy turned and flew upstairs. Denny was being hurt almost beyond endurance. His voice still echoed in her ears, and the memory of his miserable baby face spurred on her feet. Oh, God, what did they intend to do with him, with the precious flag

that had filled her soul with thrilling gladness ever since she'd learned the meaning of it? Her bedroom door stood open at the top of the stairs. In an instant she had crawled under the bed, put her hand into a wooden box and was in the hall again, the flag gathered in her arms. It was then her eye caught sight of something on the narrow shelf on the wall which held the night candle. She snatched it up, thrust it into her bosom and almost tumbled down the stairs.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE LITTLE GENERAL

IN two bounds she was close to the two men with the pale little child between them.

Denny's great brown eyes greeted her in mute appeal and Judy held out her arms.

"Here's the flag!" she said with a sob. "Now give 'im to me, give 'im to me, I say! Poor little feller, you're scarin' 'im almost to death, grandpap."

Neither Jim nor Ketchel let Denny's arm go.

"Throw the rag on the floor," commanded grandfather.

Without an instant's delay Judy flung the flag down.

"There!" she cried. "Now gimme the baby! Gimme him!"

Grandfather Ketchel tightened his grip on the little boy's arm. His faded old eyes glittered at her like bits of bright steel.

With his free hand he pointed to the flag crumpled in a heap where the girl had thrown it.

"Now stamp on the blasted thing," he snarled, "an' then, you huzzy, *spit on it*."

A passionate, vehement refusal sprang to her lips just as Denny screamed; but a twist of his thin little arm in Jim's strong hand brought the boy's small jaws snapping together. Poor baby Denny! Many a severe lesson had been taught him through physical agony, but nothing ever like this. Oh, to get him in her arms, to have his slender little hands holding fast to her curls. Judy considered his agonized face an instant, then looked down at the flag on the floor. She put up a shaking hand and thrust back the damp curls

from her forehead, wiping off the drops of water that were oozing from the pores of her skin.

"Tread on the rag," gritted grandpap, "an', an' spit on it."

Judy's hand fell from her head to her throbbing bosom, and then—then she felt the thing she had taken from the hall shelf.

"Do what I bid you, miss," insisted Ketchel, "or—or I'll—I'll——"

Judy flung out one hand in passionate interruption.

"I can't," she gasped, "I can't! . . . Denny! Oh, God! Grandpap, grandpap——"

"Best mind your granddaddy, Judy," advised Sliver Jim, the pallor of his face deepening at the girl's resistance.

Grandpap blinked at her.

"Stamp on it," he gritted savagely.

Not one step did Judy take toward that red, white and blue flag on the floor. Only did she hold her hand tightly over the front of her thin, damp blouse; only did her torn young soul cry out to Honor Lessington's God, away off up there in the sky. And suddenly back through that immeasurable space between her and the Infinite did Judy Ketchel hear the words, "He will carry you through!"

She wouldn't step on that starry banner of the land of the free, but "He will carry you through," came to her lips and fell from them in a whisper.

Impatiently Sliver Jim gave a sharper turn to Denny's arm. A strained, bitter cry fell from the boy's lips. Then Judy—well, she wasn't the Judy of yesterday, the Judy with the hide and go seek dimples, nor the lover of birds and all living things. She forgot that somewhere a majestic presence had promised to carry her through, forgot about the sparrows, forgot that "God is Love," that, down back of the hill where the sun went to bring up tomorrow, deliverance would come for Denny. All she realized in the center of her

dumb, suffering soul was that Sliver Jim was relentlessly twisting the baby's arm, and that grandpap was enjoying the child's hurt with all his German might. She had suddenly tumbled from an ecstatic faith to a crazed rage, like a jungle creature, who, seeing her young tortured by the strong, felt only that she must kill, kill and kill.

Her hand slipped into her blouse, and before either Herman Ketchel or Jim Shuckies could count two, Judy had whipped out before their startled eyes grandpap's revolver. In its rusty old nose was a gaping hole out of which a death-dealing, swift-winged piece of lead might at any instant come forth.

"Take your hands off'n him," she cried. "Both of you, take your hands offen him, an' do it quick."

So suddenly was Denny free that he fell forward on the floor.

"Now stick your hands up in the air, Sliver, you skunk, you," said Judy, in the same terrible tone.

Shuckies' eyes bulged almost out of his head, but obediently he reached for the ceiling.

"Don't move, grandpap," shrieked Judy, "or I sure'll kill Jim deader'n any kid you got in Rogues' Harbor graveyard! . . . Denny, look up at Judy, darlin', look up!"

Denny did look up, but at the sight of his sister he dropped his face to the floor.

"Crawl over to me, Denny," ordered the girl. "Crawl, I say! Crawl on your stomach, darlin', if you can't get to your knees. . . . An' Denny, darlin', grab the flag as you come along."

The boy wriggled from between the legs of the men and dragged himself painfully towards the crumpled Star Spangled Banner. His shaking, little fingers took hold of the flag, and, as he squirmed on toward the stair door where Judy Ketchel stood, the flag moved as he moved. When he reached Judy's feet, she jerked him quickly up. It had all happened in a deadly

silence; it had all been so unforeseen that neither Ketchel nor Shuckies uttered a word when Judy lifted the boy on one arm, opened the stair door and swiftly mounted the steps.

And thus a little, yellow-haired general won the first victory over the Germans, and a small, maimed lover of the Stars and Stripes rescued the glorious emblem from insult at the hands of the enemy.

Light-footed as a tigress and panting from fright and effort, Judy strode into her room.

Denny was unconscious when she laid him on her bed. One little arm hung limp and useless. Sliver Jim had put more power into his twist than had grandfather Ketchel, and Denny's bones were as brittle as clay. For fully thirty seconds the girl, tearless, pallid and shivering, stood looking down upon him.

She heard a movement in the kitchen below, but she didn't seem to fear it.

Still clutched in her hand was grandpap's revolver, the only thing in the Ketchel home that could have won her fight against her tormentors.

Then she heard Sliver Jim utter a violent oath, but she didn't care for that either. Judy was used to wicked words.

All of a sudden grandfather Ketchel laughed, the cackling, senile laugh of the aged. Like a startled deer, Judy flung up her head. What made grandpap laugh like that? Had Sliver Jim thought of some other way to torture Denny?

In impotent anguish she sank to her knees beside the bed. In the gloom of that upper room bitter desolation fell about her, and misery, seemingly never to be ended, rent both her body and spirit. It was then she remembered the Lady in the Garden of Glory, and Roderick Kingsland of Kingsland Court, Ithaca, N. Y. Would they, could they help her in this dreadful hour? Honor Lessington had told her more than once that Jesus was able to do anything a person asked of Him.

And so there beside the boy whose senses were gone where all lost senses go, her arms across his thin, little body, Judy prayed.

"God, dear, beautiful, good God, listen to me! Don't think about the war nor nothin' for a minute. Just think of Denny. Amen! Oh, God, Amen!"

Judy couldn't think of anything else to say. Below in the kitchen the two men were gabbling in German. Grandfather laughed again, and Judy could but murmur in her terror, "Amen, Oh, God! Amen!"

Silently she crawled across the floor to the chimney pipe. At her side she laid the revolver, then bent her head to listen.

Grandpap was still chuckling.

"'Tain't no laughin' matter," muttered Sliver Jim. "The huzzy threatened to shoot two honest Germans. If I had her, I'd wring 'er neck."

"Then go get 'er," cackled grandpap, "because—because, Sliver, that thunderin' gun ain't been loaded for ten years."

Shuckies' jaws fell apart, and his muscles relaxed.

Judy heard grandpap strike a match, and later by a few seconds the pungent smell of cheap tobacco drifted to her nostrils.

"Go upstairs, an' drag them two brats down here, Jim," mumbled Ketchel.

Sliver Jim got to his feet quaking. He wanted them too, but he was afraid, desperately afraid of a bullet. If what Herman Ketchel said were true, and the revolver Judy had threatened him with weren't loaded, he could have her on his knees to him in a few minutes.

"I'll get 'em down, if what you say's so, Herman," he agreed, "but just don't do nothin' to spoil Judy's face. Do whatever you like to the boy, an' I don't care, but leave her to me. She'll be glad to marry me when I get done with 'er."

"Get 'em down," spat grandpap, "an' don't show no

white feather. If I'd had the brains of a pup I'd known 'twas my gun she had, an' 'twasn't loaded."

Judy was on her feet instantly. The gun hadn't been loaded any of the time then, but—"Oh, dear God, do something," went over in her mind in passionate entreaty. She could expect no mercy from Shuckies. He would drag her down to the depths of humiliation and Denny to horrible suffering. She heard Jim leave his chair. He was coming after her, after Denny. She knew that! She gave a dazed glance about. She no longer listened to what grandpap was saying to Sliver. It didn't matter! For a few pulsing moments she stood there in the center of the dingy bedroom, unable to form a plan of fight or retreat. She'd rather be dead than go down to Sliver Jim. She'd rather have Denny dead too. Suddenly a terrible thought leapt into her mind like something alive. Without considering what the consequences might be she snatched a match from the table, swept it along the floor and touched its sputtering flame to a handful of newspapers, the ends of which she twisted frantically. The stairway door opened, and Jim's foot was on the first step. With the papers flaming torchlike in her hand, Judy Ketchel sprang to the top of the stairs and flung them down upon Shuckies' upturned face.

"There!" she yelled. "That for you, Sliver! You'll come up, will you? Well, just don't, or I'll fire the hull damned house. Get back, get back, for I'm droppin' another."

An oath sprang from the lips of the man at the bottom of the steps. He caught at the burning papers, threw them on the kitchen floor and trampled the fire out with his great boots.

Then, enraged beyond discretion, he bounded to the stairs, only to be met by a blazing quilt, fire leaping from its ragged edges. This, too, Jim dragged into the kitchen, extinguishing the flames in frantic desperation.



"The brat'll fire the hull place," he prophesied as he worked.

It was then that grandpap rasped out in German, "Shut the door, Jim, an' leave her alone for a spell. . . . The house'll be burnt down about our ears. Leave 'er alone, I say."

Sliver Jim slammed the stair door. The hostilities were over for the time. The second battle with the Germans won, gave Judy Ketchel a space to get her breath. Never afterward could she tell how long she stood there, neither listening to nor caring about the steady flow of German oaths that came up through the thin ceiling.

She glanced toward the bed. The child lay on his back where she had first put him—his white face and staring eyes directed upward to the rafters.

Then Judy heard the kitchen door open, and Olive's voice came sharply to her as the lame girl greeted Sliver Jim and grandfather Ketchel.

## CHAPTER X

### OLIVE TALKS

JUDY KETCHEL stirred slightly when Olive banged the kitchen door. She was glad her cousin had come in. She had confidence that Olive wouldn't allow Sliver Jim to leave the kitchen, for Judy knew, oh, how many times she'd been told, that Olive desired Shuckies for herself.

The sound of voices and moving bodies came up to her indistinctly. She took a noiseless stride to the chimney pipe. There, in a crouching position, she could easily distinguish all that was said in the under room. She must know what grandpap was going to order Jim and Olive to do to Denny.

"Ja!" Olive was saying, apparently in response to a question. "Some rain! . . . Murder, but it smells rank in here! Been tryin' to burn the shanty down, huh?"

Grandpap croaked in rage, and Sliver Jim answered the girl's query by gruffly telling her to shut her mouth.

Olive laughed. She was used to Shuckies' arbitrary commands.

"I guess I can yap, Jim," she retorted, "as long as I don't use your beak to do it with. . . . Say, granddaddy, what's up? . . . You had a fight with Judy Ketchel, I bet."

"I had a fight with 'er, all right," he grated. "But nuther Jim nor me's done with her yet. She can't fire no house of mine without gettin' into trouble."

His granddaughter seated herself on Denny's little stool, gathered her damp skirts about her heavy shoes and whistled a long, low note.

"Phew!" she commented presently. "Jude's temper gets worse an' worse. . . . Go on, an' tell me 'bout it."

The girl at the chimney above heard Olive drag the story, bit by bit, from the two men. Sometimes they jabbered in German, sometimes in English; but no word escaped Judy's tingling ears, for yet there lay before her the rest of that terrible afternoon, the night, tomorrow and all the after tomorrows! . . . and grandpap's word went in the Ketchel household.

She glanced at the bed, where Denny's large, bright eyes were now centered upon her. He was so tiny, such a dear, dear baby! She took a long, gasping, desperate breath. Then she tried to smile at him, but the dimples were lost in the grief of that wistful, yearning encouragement. She placed her finger on her lips, which Denny knew meant he must be quiet.

The conversation had ceased in the kitchen. Evidently grandpap had gone to sleep. She could hear him enjoying himself with his little dream girl. Stealthily Judy crawled on her knees to the bed, the boy's eyes following her, and when she shoved her face close to his, his white lids drooped wearily. She had only an instant, but that was time enough to send a quivering hope to the silent child.

"You're a bully, little, Yankee soldier-man, Denny," she choked. "Don't budge, an' keep your clap shut!"

The little chap tried to smile too, but smiles were beyond his power just then.

When Olive's high pitched voice rose again, her cousin was back at the chimney.

"I 'spose you tried, besides the other things, to get Judy to say she'd marry you, eh, Jim?" the lame girl conjectured, "an' she kicked up a row. . . . Some kicker, that Judy Ketchel!"

"She's goin' to marry Jim," sniffed grandpap, "but not 'til she's had a lesson or two from me. Women're like brats—you got to learn 'em how to behave."

Through every one of her young years Judy Ketchel

had been learning German philosophy—that a woman's life amounts to little, that her dominating mate is all powerful, his word is law and his every desire must be catered to. So grandpap's ranting had no effect upon her save to enliven her mind to the need of the hour, to get Denny out and away.

"Both of you rag Judy an' Denny too much, I think," continued Olive. "Nuther one of 'em can say they've a soul of their own. Now, if 'twas me, an' I was Judy, I'd a done more'n she did. . . . Don't you hit me with your cane, grandpap! . . . I ain't Judy-flack, an' I ain't Denny. I'd as lief crack you back with this stool I'm settin' on as anything. Mebbe I will if you get sassy! . . . Put down that cane, I say!"

"An' who's more right than me to hit you, miss?" snapped Ketchel. "Can't I whack my own if I like?"

Olive made an ugly sound of disgust.

"Granddaddies ain't no right beatin' folks," she shot back. "A man sure can lick his woman, mebbe—if he's big enough. . . . Just keep your cane to crawl around on, grandpap, if y' don't want a bigger fight with me than Judy give you! . . . I'm warnin' you, that's all!"

The last words were delivered in a harsh, obstinate tone. Evidently Ketchel didn't want to quarrel with Olive, for his cane remained at his side.

"You don't get no luck out of what you do to Judy, grandpap, as I see," went on Olive. "If you'd let Denny alone she'd be better, an' you just about scare the life out of the brat, that's sure. . . . Lordy, but she made a fine muss of old Granny Ketchel's bedquilt, setting it on fire, huh?"

"Ja," mumbled grandpap. "But if she'd hadn't a got Denny, I'd a—a—a——"

Olive laughed again.

"Judy'll scrap for that kid as long as there's a inch of her left," said she, in a sneering tone, "an' all this

mussin' up things tryin' to get 'er to spit on a rotten, old flag?"

"An' over marryin' me," put in Sliver Jim, hastily.

"I bet she never does that," retorted Olive. "Guess I'll go up an' see 'er."

The last drawling decision brought Judy upright. Her fingers shot forward and seized a handful of matches, but Olive's voice, loud and strained, caused her to put them back on the table.

"No, you ain't goin' to, Jim Shuckies," Judy heard. "I'm goin' up myself. Mebbe I'll help grandpap get Denny tomorrow, an' mebbe I won't. . . . It all depends on how you both act. . . . If you get to cuttin' up any German tricks on me, then I take side with the kids upstairs. You both think Judy Ketchel's some fighter, but you ain't seen me begin yet. Judy an' me'll show you what barn cats can do, so look out. . . . Don't you go near them stairs, Sliver, 'til I've seen Judy-flack. See! I'm tellin' you now for your own good, Jim. . . . I got to take off these wet duds too."

Judy slipped to the bed where the boy lay so quietly, wide-eyed and pale. She leaned over him, trying with all her might to keep back the tears.

"Olive's comin' up, Denny," she whispered, brokenly. "Shut your eyes, an' don't say a word. Just make believe you're dead. . . . You'll never get another whack as long as you live,—if I can help it."

Weary, white lids drooped over the baby's brown eyes as a door opened below, and Olive came limping up the stairs. At the top of the narrow flight she halted, and for a moment the two girls stood staring at each other. Then Olive's mouth widened in a grin.

"Mussed things up some, eh, Judy?" she remarked.

"Had to," answered Judy, flinging back her curls.

Olive moved into the center of the room.

"I got to talk a while to you," she muttered in a

lone tone. "I ain't up here to help grandpap nor Jim nuther."

"I know it," breathed Judy.

The lame girl leaned forward and considered her cousin's white face during a momentary silence.

"Guess you'd as soon die as marry Jim, wouldn't you, Jude?" she inquired.

"Much ruther, Ollie," responded Judy. "Heaps ruther!"

Olive squatted on the floor.

"Set down here by me," she said, making a motion with her hand.

With a flashing glance at Denny, Judy dropped down beside the bed.

"They just about done the brat up, I guess," commented Olive. "Jim says you fit like a wild cat. . . . You did, didn't you?"

"Just like the Poot does when anybody but me tries to pick 'im up," Judy nodded. "I had to, Ollie."

This time Olive's head bent in assent.

"But you'd marry Jim ruther'n have Denny hurt a lot—now wouldn't you?" she demanded in a hoarse whisper.

"Yep," assented Judy. "I'd let 'em tear the skin offen me to help him!"

And every one of those words were true. Only one idea held supreme place in Judy Ketchel's soul,—the welfare of little Denny!

"Yep," she took up again deliberately, "I'd marry Sliver if the baby'd always be happy. An'—an'——" She touched her face with shaking fingers. "An'," she repeated, "marryin' Jim'd be worse'n travelin' through hell!"

"That's funny," ruminated Olive, thoughtfully. "Say, where would you take the brat if you left here?"

Judy's mind went to the Garden of Glory.

"I dunno for sure," she hesitated. "I guess Jim'd



stop me if I tried to get out. . . . Now wouldn't he?"

"He sure would, Judy, but there's always some way! Lean over here while I say something to you."

When Judy's white face came almost within touching distance of the other girl's, Olive pressed on in a very low voice.

"There ain't no use my tellin' you I'd help Jim in anything but gettin' married to somebody else; but I won't do that. I never had much use for you, nor Denny, nuther. You got a dish-watery way with you, that's all. Grandpap never has durst do to me what he's did to you. . . . Now I'm goin' down, an' I'll keep Jim and grandpap busy gabbin' while you beat it, see? Beat it any way you can, only don't come downstairs. Jim's red-headed, he's that mad. Mebbe you can manage some way gettin' out. . . . That's all I can do now."

Judy snatched Olive's outflung hand.

"Some day I'll do something for you, Ollie," she vowed.

Olive got to her feet and dragged her hand away from Judy's.

"Just don't let Jim bully you into marryin' him," she said gruffly. "You can do that, an' get your brains to workin' quick—if you've got any left!"

For a long time after Olive had changed her clothes and taken her limping way down the rickety stairs, Judy Ketchel sat huddled on the floor. If it had been a matter of getting away herself she could have accomplished it easily, but there was Denny with his hurt arm, and Denny was only a baby! He'd be difficult to move with a broken bone. She crept to the window and looked out. It was still raining hard, and the country beyond was gloomy and mist-laden. The window led out to the slanting roof of a woodshed just back of the kitchen. How often she'd run down its slope and jumped to the ground! But how to get

Denny down, sick as he was? Of course he'd cry out! Then Jim would know she was going away.

Olive had accused her of being weak as dish-water. Well, perhaps she was, but she must make one more effort, and shudderingly, Judy realized this trial was even more dangerous than the horrible scenes she'd just been through.

She went back to the bed and looked at Denny. His thin, blue lips were pursed tightly over his teeth. Judy put her mouth close to his ear.

"Denny, sister's going to take you away, but you got to be awful quiet, stiller'n if you was dead. I'm goin' to put a rag in your mouth so you can't make a bit of noise, cry nor nuthin' like that! . . . If you should Jim'll get you, an' so'll grandpap."

A horrified expression passed over the child's face, and Judy loathed herself for adding to Denny's anguish; but he had to understand.

"You don't want them to get you no more, Denny darlin', do you?"

Judy went giddy when she saw the effect her murmured question had produced. The little boy writhed, but his lips kept back the groans that constantly came up in his throat.

"An' you remember my tellin' you 'bout my Lady of Roses?" Judy went on.

Her brother made an acquiescent movement.

"She says," Judy paused to swallow her tears, "she says," she repeated in a faltering whisper, "that a feller can believe he'll be carried through without usin' his tongue, just by thinkin' good things all the time in his head, Denny! Glory-like Heaven'll help you through. . . . You hear sister, don't you, Denny?"

Denny didn't understand quite all Judy was saying, but this much he did get into his confused brain. She was going to take him away! Perhaps he'd see the Garden of Roses which she often told him about. All through the past winter Judy had promised that when

the flowers began to bloom, she'd take him some day to the Glory Garden, and Denny had faith in her promises. She'd said too, he'd never be whacked again. No wonder when Denny thought of flowers, peace and no grandpap, and no Sliver Jim, he took sharp hold of his under lip with his small, pointed, white teeth.

From the kitchen below Olive's voice broke out.

"You'll not see Jude Ketchel tonight, Jim," she was insisting, "but that ain't sayin' I'm tellin' you to get out of the house. You can stay as long as you like. . . . I guess if you did go home now, Judy's beat it."

"Then I stay," Sliver bellowed.

"Stay all night, Sliver," snuffled grandfather Ketchel.

"Sure, all night," repeated Shuckies.

"I say, grandpap," shouted Olive, as if she intended the whole countryside to hear, "let's me an' you and Jim have a game of cards an' some beer, eh? No use bein' grumpy just because Granny Ketchel's bedquilt got burnt. 'Twas all ragged, anyhow. . . . Hundred years old, wasn't it, huh, grandpap?"

"Ja, an' the grossmutter brung it clear here from Germany," grunted grandpap, puffing until his pipe sang in protestation.

Judy waited until she heard the sound of cards being thrown on a table and the pop of beer bottles in the kitchen.

"Now let's have some fun, the three of us," laughed Olive. "Up with your beer, an' drink to——"

"Germany," croaked grandpap, in interruption.

"Germany," cried Jim, and "Germany," repeated Olive, hoarsely.

What Olive was doing downstairs was clear enough to her cousin. Gladly would she have hugged her if she'd had the chance. Olive intended to keep Shuckies under her own eyes as long as possible. Judy stooped over the bed almost fainting. The time for action had come; not another minute must be wasted.

"Open your mouth, Denny," she whispered.

Down dropped Denny's underjaw obediently. Before any sound of pain could escape the boy's lips, Judy Ketchel had thrust a piece of cloth as far back near his throat as she dared.

"Now bite hard, darlin'," she directed in a tone almost inaudible.

Denny's teeth came together, the end of the rag protruding from between his lips. Then swiftly Judy tied another piece of cloth about the child's little chin, bringing its ends together, and tying them in a knot over his towseled head. It was a ghastly thing she had accomplished, a ghastly sight for her to see. But the hardest task came, though, when she touched the slender broken arm. When she did it, her own teeth closed tightly for surely hadn't she been holding on hard to her nerves she couldn't have prevented herself from screaming.

"Help him, help Denny, God up in the sky! Carry 'im through," groaned the girl's soul, and never was a prayer more quickly answered. A terrible pain attacked Denny's arm just where Jim had gripped it, and his young senses soared away, leaving him silent and rag-betied, like a small corpse ready for burial.

Creeping like a tigress after its prey, Judy went again to the window. Carefully she slipped out the lower sash and, without any noise, placed it on the floor, and there before her but a few feet away was God's blessed earth; only a slanting roof lay between Denny and the green grass. One glance up the hill showed her the mist travelling rapidly along the sky line like troops of slender ghosts. The fog was her friend too for once within its sheltering depths she would be quite lost in its opal grey.

She turned swiftly around and noticed the large flag on the floor where she had thrown it after coming upstairs. She picked it up and spread it out. Then she kissed it passionately, and lifting her heavy-lidded

eyes she uttered one more little prayer, the Stars and Stripes held upward to the raftered roof.

"Dear God, help me an' the flag. Keep Denny from the Germans."

The boy was still unconscious when she rolled the starry banner about him. The opposite corners of it she tied in strong, hard knots. If it hadn't been that Denny's head hung limply over the brilliant stripes, he would have resembled nothing more than a good sized bundle of clothes, wrapped up in the American colors.

Just as Judy lifted him with her strong arms a loud laugh sounded from the kitchen.

In another minute, holding the baby tightly, Judy had thrown her legs over the windowsill and had seated herself ready for the wet glide to the ground. Bit by bit she compassed the shingled roof, but when she reached the rain trough, she braced her feet against it and slid her arm under the knots in the flag. The rain fell heavily, but the driving water was nothing to be compared to the evil in the kitchen.

She stretched herself out flat, holding to the edge of the roof with one hand. Carefully she began to lower the little one downward. The sudden lessening of the strain on her arm assured her Denny lay on the grass. She could plainly see him there, see the blessed stars of the flag mingling indefinitely with its stripes. Then she sprang down to the ground, snatched Denny up in her arm and sped away from the farmhouse, and the fast moving mist swallowed her up.

Never had Judy Ketchel needed such strength and speed as she did then. Never in all the world did a girl's bare feet travel so swiftly, and, in spite of the weight of the boy's inanimate body, she ran through the wet grass, plodded through the puddles of water in the lane and down toward the railroad track. When she reached the narrow trail that ran along the fence, she turned southward.

Once out of the sight of Rogues' Harbor, Judy



halted under a large tree and placed the boy on the ground. With her skirt she wiped the water from his white face, talking in broken love terms to him.

"A fine, little, Yankee soldier, you are, Denny," she gulped. "Speak a word, old scout. . . . Denny!"

His eyes opened, and dazedly he looked at her. She kissed the small, damp face passionately.

"I got you out of grandpap's, Denny," she quavered, "an' now I'm goin' to take the rag out of your mouth; but you mustn't cry nor holler, or mebbe Jim'll get us yet."

As Judy slowly drew the cloth from between Denny's jaws, he gave a long, drawn-out groan. Oh, how she wanted to do something to take that dreadful expression of pain from his eyes!

"Denny," she whispered, "you're all wrapped up in the glory flag, an' it'll make you as strong as a horse mebbe. An' baby darlin', God's just up there in the trees. . . . Now, now we're goin' on. . . . Up we come!"

She lifted him ever so gently, but even that tender touch on his bruised little body sent Denny again into insensibility. Judy had only one desire, to reach the Lady of Roses before grandpap and Jim discovered her escape. She knew that God and peace were in the House of Mystery. Where Honor Lessington lived, there was help for Denny.

On and on she pattered under the swaying, dripping trees, breathing rapidly. The burden she carried was getting heavier by the minute. For a long stretch she had been so intent on making headway that she hadn't looked at Denny. When she did glance down upon him, she stopped short with a low cry. He must be dead! No human being ever looked like that with life in his blood. She laid him down on the turf beside the path, shoved back the rain-drenched flag and lowered her head to his chest.

And this was what young Theodore Kingsland saw



as he halted on the railroad track! A seemingly dead child wrapped in the United States flag, and bending over him the mute, agonized figure of a girl, heavy wet curls shrouding her face. Judy hadn't heard his approach, so she spoke aloud, not knowing there were any ears to hear, save the birds in the trees, and perhaps God somewhere about.

"Denny, Denny darlin', she moaned, "open your eyes for a little minute."

Teddy Kingsland left the railroad track and in one bound was standing over the kneeling girl.

"Is he dead?" he asked, awed at the sight.

At the question Judy threw back her head in horror, but she flung one arm over the boy. Then she looked at the speaker in silence, and he stared back at her. Teddy's cap was in his hand, and the rain was falling on his shock of red curls. Kindly brown eyes told Judy the stranger meant no harm to her little brother.

"I don't know," she whispered, "mebbe he is! . . . I guess so!"

Teddy Kingsland knelt beside her.

"Let me see," he said in moved tones. . . . "No, he's not dead. . . . Here—let me carry him."

The little boy opened his eyes and groaned. He'd heard strange tones and being very much afraid, afraid of every one but his sister, he, too, began to cry.

To know he was living was more than Judy could bear! She flung herself down beside the boy.

"Denny, if you'll live, I'll take care of you forever and ever," she wailed.

Theodore Kingsland choked down a lump in his throat. He was young, strong and happy and knew nothing of distress or sorrow.

"Get up!" he made the command curt, but his voice softened as he went on, "Let me carry the little chap, please!"

As if to protect him, Judy thrust both her arms over Denny.

"No, you can't!" she broke out. "He's my brother. He's—he's a soldier man an' awful hurt, an' I'm takin' him——" Judy faltered. She didn't know what explanation to make to this serious young man. She couldn't tell him about grandpap nor Sliver Jim. "I'm takin' 'im home," she finished, sobbing.

"He looks awful sick," said Teddy, anxiously. "What happened to him?"

Judy brushed back her hair and raised her pale, twitching face.

"Some Germans broke 'is arm," she announced somberly.

The accusation, all the circumstances of this strange adventure, seemed fantastic and impossible to Theodore Kingsland. There was nothing hysterical in the girl's manner, and although spoken so low, her statement had a terrible reality in it. But such a thing couldn't be.

"My God," he exclaimed, "not really Germans——"  
Quickly Judy intervened.

"Yes, Germans did it," she reiterated, "an' if you don't let me get along with him, some one might come after us."

Teddy got to his feet, his clothes muddy and wet. The girl was making crazy utterances. He looked down upon her, throbbing with sympathy. Perhaps she was a little touched in the head. At any rate she looked so white, so tired, he couldn't go on home and leave her there in the rain. What if she had lost her mind? All the more reason he should be of service if possible.

"Let me take him," he begged. "I'll carry him. Come, do! . . . Where do you live?"

Although Denny cried out and tried to cling to his sister, Theodore Kingsland lifted him tenderly in his arms.

"All right, old comrade, all right, little soldier," he

soothed. "There now! We're going on." Then he asked Judy, "Which way?"

The girl shot ahead of him, and the strange trio moved on through the descending drops of rain that fell from the overspread limbs of the trees. When they came in sight of McKinney's Point, Judy halted.

"Gimme Denny! . . . Please, mister." Her voice broke a little. "I'm goin' to take 'im home."

Teddy Kingsland held firmly to the boy.

"No," he refused, shaking his head, "I'll carry him."

He stood waiting for Judy to move on, but she only gazed up into his face, her eyes dazzling blue.

"If I let you come a ways farther," she protested finally, "I bet you'll tell some one where I took 'im."

So there was a mystery in it after all, thought Teddy. Still from out of somewhere, he'd acquired an inexplicable faith in the shaking girl, planted in a mud puddle before him.

"What's your name?" His question was not prompted by mere curiosity. "And who——"

"That ain't none of your business, mister," interrupted Judy. Then noticing the flush that spread over Teddy's face she gasped, "Gimme Denny, sir. Nobody can't know where he's going', see? . . . There's something I can't tell. Let me have 'im."

"No," refused Teddy, once more. "No! If you'll let me carry him a bit farther I promise, I give you my word, I'll never tell anybody I ever saw you."

A strange feeling of warmth surged about Judy's heart. How good, how very kind this strange young man was! The surest path to Judy's faith was kindness to Denny. So on they walked, the girl paying no attention to the water-ruts nor to the cinders that left their dents in her bare feet.

When they came into the open space near the House of Mystery, Judy stopped again and looked up at Teddy Kingsland.

"Mister," she stammered, "I lied to you just now!"

I ain't goin' to take Denny home never any more. I'm just goin' to the Lady of Roses!"

Teddy's eyelids felt as though hot water was being poured over them. The slender bare arms of the girl were thrust forth.

"Gimme the baby," she said hoarsely, "an' remember what you said! It's just this, mister, you ain't never seen Denny, nor you ain't never seen me."

"No," dropped in monosyllabic answer from Teddy Kingsland, and he surrendered the boy without further argument. Something new, something strangely precious had come to him. This girl, so like a beautiful, wild, young animal, had aroused in him a mysterious emotion. For perhaps the space of fifteen seconds, these two looked straight at each other. The thin mist seemed to cut them off from the rest of the world. Brown eyes discovered in blue eyes, and blue eyes, in brown, something wonderful, vaguely glimpsed but beyond everything desirable.

"Mebbe someday I'll tell you about it, mister," Judy murmured, cuddling Denny close.

Then Teddy made a motion by throwing out both his hands.

"Never mind about that," he said. "Good luck, little girl! And get a doctor quick for the soldier boy."

He strode on by McKinney's, but when he reached the curve in the railroad track, he turned and looked back to see the girl struggling up the hill through the wet grass toward the House of Mystery.

## CHAPTER XI

### CITIZENS OF THE WORLD

ON the divan in Honor Lessington's sitting-room, lay Denny in all the glory of the Stars and Stripes. Beside him was stationed the Lady of Roses, so pale, so haggard and white that her anxiety was apparent without any words. Near the door stood Judy Ketchel.

"I got your honest to God vow you won't tell nobody he's here," she gasped. "You promised me, an' said you'd make Dr. Carmen promise too!"

Mrs. Lessington made a frantic gesture.

"Yes, yes, dear! But wait a little while. Tell me what happened. . . . You mustn't go back. Oh, I can't have you go back!"

The girl threw up her head. A weird little pucker appeared at the corner of her lips. Now that her brother was safe she could bear anything. Wasn't he there under the eye of the Lady of Roses, and wasn't Dr. Carmen coming to fix his broken arm? What more could a girl want? Of course, she had to go back to Rogues' Harbor. She hadn't taken the time to explain to Honor how Denny came to be so hurt. She had to get back quicker than she had come.

"But I've got to," she answered. "Mebbe I'll come again before mornin'. I will if I can, mam! . . . Get the doctor quick."

Mrs. Lessington, unable to say another word, watched the door open and, before she could utter a warning, Judy Ketchel was out again in the threshing rain.

Night was beginning to drape the lake country with her black mantle, when Judy was once more flying along the path beside the railroad. She knew the way to

grandpap's in sunshine or shadow, so was quite unaware of the thick misty twilight.

When, after a long, hard run, she stopped breathless a little distance from the Ketchel farmhouse, a light was shining in the kitchen window. At first she was spurred to look through the small pane of glass; but to do that meant going very close to the house, so she crept around to the woodshed and scrambled up the shingled roof to the open window. There she stopped and listened stealthily. The sound of voices came from the kitchen below. Over the sill where but a little while before she had clambered with Denny in her arms, she stepped again, and dropping to her knees, crawled across the bedroom floor.

Loud laughter told her plainly that the card players were making merry over their beer and pretzels. Sliver Jim's guffaw and Olive's hoarse echo mingled with grandfather Ketchel's wheeze. Judy sat down quietly near the warm chimney-pipe and rested her cheek on her hand.

Meantime there had fallen a silence in the kitchen, save for the clinking of glasses and the monotonous throwing down of cards on the table. Suddenly Olive gave a disgruntled laugh.

"Oh, Himmel, grandpap's gone to sleep," she complained. "Now I s'pose the old duffer'll snooze 'til mornin', dopin' out stuff about Aunt Claudy 'til one gets sick of it."

"An' the game's spoiled," growled Jim.

"Never mind," rejoined Olive. "I guess the kids upstairs're asleep. . . . Ain't heard no sound in an age, have you?"

Sliver yawned drunkenly.

"Nope, but I'd like to wake 'em up," said he, gruffly.

"But you won't! Tomorrow's time enough to get in your whack at Jude Ketchel. The fact is, Jim, you might's well try to fight a treed cat as Judy unless you get Denny away from her."



Shuckies pushed the cards from in front of him and emptied his bottle of beer into his glass.

"Oh, I'll get him," he retorted, "an' when I do it'll be something Miss Judy Ketchel won't forget." Then he tossed off the beer with one swallow.

Olive listened intently. Could Judy have fallen asleep, wasting a precious opportunity to get away! How she had hoped for some sign from that upstairs room! And how she had worked to keep grandpap and Sliver Jim from turning their attention to its occupants! It seemed as if she couldn't wait any longer. She got up, stretched and went to the window.

"It's rainin' cats an' dogs," she said, coming back. "It's a good thing you made up your mind to stay, Sliver."

"'Twasn't the rain kept me from goin' home," grunted Shuckies. "When I think of the trick Judy played with that gun I get crazy mad. Godawmighty me! What a fool I was!"

"Forget it," snapped Olive, sitting down.

Jim's eyes glinted grey through his half closed lids.

"I'll remember when the time comes all right, all right," he threatened darkly. "No woman puts a thing over on me twice, I can tell you that."

The lame girl got up stiffly, went to the cupboard and brought out two more bottles of beer.

"Never can tell what Judy'll do," she offered on her return to the table.

"True 'nough! That's sure," replied Jim, "but I can tell what I'll do without figurin' much. An', Ollie, —say what you tryin' to do, get me drunk? My head's swimmin' now."

Olive filled his glass and her own.

"A few bottles of suds won't make you tipsy, old horse," she laughed. "If you're goin' to stay all night might's well be sociable. . . . Long time dead, Jim."

Shuckies snatched up his beer.

"Well," he grinned, "live while we live then, Ollie."

Here! Let's swig to tomorrow! Pour 'er down, old girl, wishin' while you drink, I'll get my claws on Judy Ketchel."

Olive held her goblet suspended in the air. She didn't intend to drink to *that* toast.

"Shall I wake grandpap?" queried Jim.

The girl shook her head and placed her untouched beer on the table.

"Nein, let 'im sleep. Granddaddy gets into awful tempers when he's woke up. . . . Hear that jabberin' from him, will you? Dunder! When he's asleep you'd think he was an angel. But massy, when he's awake——"

"Oh, your grandpap's all right," interrupted Jim. "But I'm going to tell you something, Ollie, long's you're a good German. . . . Won't never tell, huh?"

"Nein," promised Ollie, "but gimme a drag on your pipe first, Sliver."

"'Tain't right you should smoke, Ollie," remonstrated Jim, but he handed over the pipe in spite of his rebuke.

"Mind your business!" shot back Olive. She puffed a moment on the pipe, then passed it back to the man.

"Rotten tobacco," she observed. "What was you goin' to tell me?"

"There's goin' to be rum goin's on before long in Ithaca," responded Shuckies, "but you mustn't say nothin' to grandpap about it. He ain't for killin' folks."

Judy heard all this with a feeling of detachment and disinterestedness. Ithaca seemed so far away just then, and she had trouble enough of her own in Rogues' Harbor. She heard the voices below in the same way she caught the sound of the rain beating on the roof and the roaring of the lake, rolling northward as if the waves were in a hurry to get beyond the turn at Crowbar Point.

"What's goin' to happen?" quizzed Olive. "Aw, go

on an' tell me, Sliver! . . . You give a girl the figits, you're so slow."

Jim swayed in his chair and Olive bent forward and took hold of his arm.

"Whoop there," she called out. "Don't fall over. . . . Say! but you're certainly gettin' drunk, old sport. . . . It's that warm beer! . . . Come along now an' let's hear about Ithaca."

Jim blinked at her and cast a glance at grandpap. The old man was muttering in his sleep, his lips partly open.

"Ollie," hiccoughed Sliver, "if you wasn't so gold-darned homely an' limpy, an' so cussed crabbed-lookin', I'd marry you right off the reel, by Gott, I would; but I can't stand the sight of you."

A deathly pallor spread over Olive's face. Her fist doubled as if she intended to spoil the insulting grin on the man's countenance. She hesitated a moment, and then her fingers relaxed and fell into her lap; but the scowl that had distorted her brow remained.

"You don't have to stand lookin' at my face, Sliver—not yet," she shrilled. "So shut up about my looks. . . . I'm a good German, an' that's all you need care for. I've said I'd help you—an' I will, Jim; but if you ever say another word about my lookin' bad——"

Staggering to his feet, Sliver stretched out his hand.

"Never will," he broke in. "Put your paw in mine, Citizen of the World."

He grabbed at Olive's hand, but the girl snatched it back.

"You're drunk," she cried in terror. "Ain't you got an ounce of sense? . . . You can't have, or you wouldn't be callin' me by *that* name."

"Ain't you a Citizen of the World?" Jim persisted with tipsy gravity.

"Sure," assented Olive, "but 'tain't time yet to say so. Lord! but a little beer, an' you're soused! . . .

When you get tight, Jim, you talk too much. . . . Grandpap'd kill you if he heard what you just said."

"Kleines mädchen, liebes mädchen," muttered Ketchel, in his sleep.

Olive drew a breath of relief.

"Aw, he ain't listenin', Ollie," snickered Sliver Jim. "He's with the angels, your grandpap is! He's where a lot of Ithaca folks 're goin' when the Citizens of the World get done with 'em."

"I told you to shut up," gasped Olive, sending a horrified glance about the kitchen. "Your neck'll be wrung like a Christmas goose if you shoot off your gab like that."

Not heeding Olive's warning, Jim held up a shaking arm, and putting the forefinger of his right hand on the thumb of his left, he went on.

"Old Kingsland's the first we're to put out of the way! . . . Ollie, that man's done more for them Belgium an' French cusses than any man in this here county. . . . He's the first one out."

Olive grunted and leaned back wearily in her chair. What was the use of wasting breath? Jim was drunk, and he'd talk anyway. Better let him gab to her than to some one else.

"You mean you're goin' to croak 'im, Sliver?" she asked after a while.

"Ja?" boasted Jim. "I'll get him—sure!"

"But you can't go 'round killin' folks without gettin' into trouble, Sliver. Kingsland's too rich an' too big a man to be laid out stiff without folks findin' it out."

Olive's speech sobered the man enough so he sat up a little straighter.

"Nobody'll find it out if the Citizens of the World do it," he asserted. "There's a lot of braggin' around what the Senator's doin' for the Red Cross, an' the helpin' hand he's lendin' France. Well, he won't be no Senator long now war's broke out. Kingsland

Court's nice 'nough for the King of Prussia to live in, Kingsland Court is."

Judy got suddenly to her feet. Jim was speaking of—of Roderick Kingsland, that kindly, fine, old man who had only that day been in the same room Jim now sat in. "Citizens of the World!" went over in her mind. Who were the Citizens of the World? Why, why they were murderers if they thought of killing Roderick Kingsland, or killing anyone.

She stumbled a little as the terrible thought took possession of her brain, and it was that misstep her cousin heard. Olive bent forward quickly and put one hand over Jim's mouth. With the other she shook her grandfather.

"Judy's awake," she hissed in a low voice. "Come to, grandpap! . . . You've spoiled the game, an' your beer's went flat."

Grandfather Ketchel sat up blinking, shook himself and grumbling, took up his pipe.

"I ain't had a wink of sleep," he rapped out sharply. "Folks always say I go to sleep when I don't. . . . Ain't had a wink! I beat you and Ollie, Jim, now didn't I?"

Sliver's head was whirling around rapidly. Where one Olive sat he saw two, sometimes three—grandpap seemed a dozen swaying, wizened, old figures. He dashed his hand across his clammy forehead.

"Didn't I beat you both, Ollie?" wheedled grandpap.

Olive shrugged her shoulders.

"Game wasn't finished," she replied, and just at that moment the stair door opened, and Judy Ketchel, very pale, very erect, walked into the kitchen.

## CHAPTER XII

### COVERING DENNY'S TRAIL

OLIVE stared at her cousin as though she were something to dread, and for the fraction of a minute Judy looked at her.

With a gigantic effort Sliver Jim drew himself up straight in his chair. The shrewd expression settled once more on his face, but he didn't speak.

Grandfather Ketchel sniffed and grinned, and lighted his pipe deliberately.

Judy stood within a short distance of the door, looking first at one then at the other of the three. There was something so terrible, so strange about her that no one offered a word of greeting.

Jim, now thoroughly sober, took in the slender figure, and bare legs and feet with wicked desire for possession. There was something unusually attractive about her, so pallidly lovely, and yet so aloofly dignified. He wanted to imprint burning kisses on those curved lips, on the sun-tanned skin. His teeth came together at the thought that some day—and that day not so far away—Judy Ketchel would be his forever. As much as he wanted money, he desired Judy much more. Tonight, half drugged with alcohol, although keenly alive to the nearness of her, he longed to hurt her in some way, perhaps as he had hurt Denny—but afterwards! Heavenly mercy! How alluring she was! But Olive's presence and grandpap's, too, kept him bound in his chair, save only in his half-befogged desires.

At length, grandfather shook himself. His small eyes slowly looked Judy up and down. He drew in and sent out rolls of smoke in this oggling process. Then he held the pipe aloft in his fingers and grinned.



"So! You thought you'd come down, Judy-flack," he growled. "Gettin' hungry, you and the brat, I suppose? Eh?" . . . His body sank back against the chair, but his shaking old head was thrust forth like a turtle's. "But there ain't nothin' to eat for folks like you two in this house."

Still Judy didn't speak. She was trying to gather strength from every nerve in her body, and each passing moment gave a little more energy to her trembling purpose; a little more power to the inward prayers her soul was sending forth to the Infinite for the hurt little boy in the Garden of Glory.

"Let 'er have a drop of beer, grandpap," Olive broke in abruptly, "she looks near droppin' over. Gwan! an' say she gets a swig of beer, granddaddy."

"She gets nothin' here but a beatin' if I have my way," yapped Ketchel.

The oil lamp but dimly lighted the kitchen, so no one noticed that Judy was wet to the skin. The impulsive forward step she took toward her enemies didn't loosen the haughty tilt of her yellow head, nor change the expression on her face. The only evidence of her nervousness was a hasty pushing back of the wet curls which had crowded their weight over her shoulders during her descent of the stairs.

"I don't want anything," she told them steadily. "I only come down to let you know,——" she paused, choked and went on harshly, "Denny's dead! Just to tell you, grandpap, that you an' Sliver killed him! An' to ask you," she came a little nearer and glared at Shuckies, then back at her grandfather, "now, what you both goin' to do about it."

Olive screamed and Grandfather Ketchel's pipe fell from his fingers to the floor and broke in pieces. Sliver Jim crouched back in his chair, his face, yellow as ochre, fast beading with perspiration.

Her avowal had produced just the effect Judy wanted. Sliver was a dastardly coward. Now that his own hide

was in jeopardy, he cringed like a whipped cur, but oh, how brave he had been in bruising a baby's body!

"What you goin' to say to the folks what come to bury Denny, grandpap?" she questioned directly of Ketchel. "That's what I want to know. His arm's broke, an' bruises 're all over him." Then as if she suddenly realized her own dripping condition, "I been holdin' him out in the rain, but none of you won't ever see 'im alive again."

To the three degraded creatures gaping at her, Judy had all at once developed into some terrible, menacing power. She no longer seemed to them the Judy Ketchel they knew! not the same girl who many a time had danced to the tune of grandpap's cane and had scuttled from Shuckies' presence whenever she saw him in the fields.

Jim's mind, now rid of the effects of the beer, worked rapidly. Judy had said Denny was dead, and dealing a killing blow to a fellow mortal meant prison, perhaps death to himself.

"'Tain't pleasant to think of you two men goin' to jail," Judy continued, not daring to exclude grandpap from this threat, "but there's where you'll be long before daylight!" . . . Then, as no one was able to speak, she hammered her statement home. "Denny's dead, I tell you, dead as a door nail!"

Surely then did confusion fall among them. Olive, overcome, began to sob. Grandpap's underjaw sagged down, like a broken hinged gate, as every particle of strength deserted him. Judy caught herself wanting to absolve him from the blame. He looked so pathetic, so old and shivering. In the dead silence, broken only by Olive's weeping, and the steady fall of the rain outside, Judy noticed Sliver Jim turning his horrified eyes from one to the other. All of a sudden he bounded toward the door, but Olive snatched hold of his coat and held to him with all her might. In his terror to get away,

Sliver struck out at her madly. He was going home. The Ketchel farmhouse was no place for him.

"If you run away now, Jim," shrieked Olive, desperately, "it'll be worse for you in the end . . . I'll swear against you when you're arrested . . . I wasn't here when you killed Denny . . . Judy'll say that, won't you, Judy?"

At those ominous words, Shuckies halted and staggered back, falling limply into his chair.

"Judy'll bear me out I wasn't here," Olive repeated.

"Yep," returned Judy, "I'll say Ollie wasn't here, all right, an',—an' I'll swear by Heaven, Sliver killed Denny . . . Folks 've only got to look at the little feller to know some one strong did 'im up. Even grandpap couldn't a done it alone!" She looked at the shaken old man, pitying him with all her loving soul. "Of course, you helped, granddaddy. You know you did," she forced herself to say.

Ketchel held out a trembling hand toward his accuser. He looked so miserably supplicating she could scarcely keep herself from going to him, putting her strong young arms around him and telling him not to be afraid; but this she dared not do, nor dared she allow her face to soften one whit.

"You wouldn't get your old grandpap put in prison," quavered Ketchel. "You couldn't, Judy-flack . . . In twenty years I'll be a hundred . . . This were all your doin's, Jim Shuckies! You'll get the chair for this day's work! That's what you'll get, Jim, an' I won't be sorry a minute for you."

Grandpap's words renewed all of Judy's rage. She had no sympathy for the young German, none at all.

"Sure 'twas all his fault," she charged. "Didn't I yell at you all the time, Sliver, sayin' you were pullin' at Denny too hard, but no, on you went just the same, hurtin' the baby 'til he couldn't bear it no more . . . You busted his arm, *you* did, Jim!"

Shuckies dragged his coat sleeve across his dripping face.

"I didn't meant it!" he snivelled, "I didn't, I say I didn't."

Olive was crying hysterically.

"Shut up, Ollie!" said Judy. And as with grandpap, she found it difficult not to comfort the forlorn creature!

"I guess Jim didn't mean it, Judy," moaned Olive. "You must know down in your heart, he wouldn't have killed Denny outright! Oh, Judy, darlin', please say you know it."

Yet Judy did not move. Her eyes no longer blazed. The excitement of the first attack was beginning to die out, and a wave of fatigue swept over her. Around her mouth where the dimples usually played in and out with the smiles, hard, strained lines appeared. The task she'd undertaken! Could she carry it through?

"Auburn prison's full of men not meanin' to do dirty deeds, Ollie," she averred wearily. "But, then, 'tain't me that'll say what'll happen to Sliver. When you kill a kid you got to stand by what you've done. I say 'tain't me that'll put Jim in the chair for murder."

Olive tottered to her grandfather and squatted on the floor beside him. The old German's hand fell upon her shoulder.

"You wouldn't let the police take me, Ollie girl," he muttered. "Jail 'd kill me, an' Jim—my God, it's awful!"

"So 'tis awful," insisted Judy. "Death's awfully awful, an' it's powerful sure Sliver 'll get what's comin' to him. From my way of thinkin' it'll be good riddance to bad rubbish . . . Ollie, get up! . . . You got to come along with me to get somebody."

Judy took a few steps toward the kitchen door. Olive flung herself flat on the rough boards.

"No, no," she begged. "No, Judy! Judy, darlin'!"

. . . . No, hear me, listen I say! . . . Mebbe grandpap and Jim was a little hard on Denny."

Judy whirled back and stood over Olive, the muscles of her face twitching in anxiety.

"You needn't lay the killin' part on grandpap, Ollie," she gritted savagely. "Sliver done it, an' I saw him! Grandpap didn't kill Denny! . . . I'll swear to that on a stack of Bibles higher'n this house."

"But Jim didn't mean to do it!" groaned Olive. "Listen, Judy, he'll take his oath on that, too, won't you, Jim?"

"Sure, sure," protested Shuckies, "an' a oath's a oath, Judy Ketchel."

"Your oath ain't worth nothin', Sliver," Judy snapped roughly, walking again toward the door, "an' everybody around Rogues' Harbor knows it . . . Come along, Ollie! Let Jim do his oath-takin' to the right folks! Mebbe, they'll believe 'im, but I won't. It'll be all the worse for him if he waits 'til mornin' . . . I won't wait, so there!"

Overwhelmed, Olive scrambled to her feet. She was drab and grey with fright, her eyes eager with entreaty.

"Judy dear," she began, "you couldn't send your own grandpap to prison."

Judy swayed at the thought.

"There ain't no other way as I see," she said. "Mebbe a jury 'd be kind to 'im, mebbe they would. But you an' me's got to go for some one now. There ain't a show in the world to keep quiet about it. You can see, Ollie, as plain as I see your nose, a kid can't step off the earth without bein' missed . . . It couldn't be done, see?"

Olive's eyes gathered a stronger pleading. She held out her hands suppliantly.

"Denny could," she wailed, "Denny wasn't scarcely ever seen by any one 'round here . . . . If you keep your mouth shut, Judy——"

"My mouth 'll be wide open," interrupted Judy.



Shuckies snarled and moved his great boots outward as if to get up. He was crazed beyond endurance at Judy Ketchel. To save himself he would have struck her dead on the floor. He uttered an oath and grandpap's indistinguishable wheeze followed quickly.

Olive turned on the two men with more fire in her colorless eyes than any one had ever seen before.

"Keep settin', Jim," she lashed out, "an' if you two men want to get out of this murder scrape quit your cussin' an' rampin' . . . I don't blame Judy for bein' madder'n hell for what you've done to Denny. 'Sposin' you killed her, what good would it do? . . . Any? . . . No, not any! . . . As 'tis now, mebbe I can get her to keep mum . . . I dunno, but mebbe."

"You can't, Ollie," mouthed Judy.

"An' why not? Just why not?" challenged Olive. "I said once an' I say again no one around Rogues' Harbor ever comes to this house. Denny's stuck home so close he won't be missed,—mebbe for years. If he is, we can say he's visitin' somewheres . . . Nobody bothers about the Ketchels. Oh, Judy, for the livin' God's sake, listen!"

The two girls, one so shriveled, so terrified, the other erect, somber, and belligerent, stood facing each other with but a few inches between them.

"Judy," Olive implored, "now hear me a minute . . . Denny was your'n an' we was all dirt mean to 'im. That wasn't always because we hated him, but on account of you. Hurtin' him made you that mad that grandpap an' we loved to do it, but," she turned, thrust her hand out to Ketchel, "but many's the time I kept granddaddy from beatin' the brat when you wasn't here . . . Grandpap 'll bear me out in that."

"You have, Ollie, you have," moaned Ketchel.

"Everyone of you hated him just because his ma wasn't German, poor, dead thing," mourned Judy.

"Mebbe we have, I say, only mebbe," Olive responded, swiftly, "but now we're sorry . . . I'm sorry! . . .



Grandpap's sorry, an' Jim's sorry . . . We're all sorry. Judy, you can't send your old granddaddy to prison for years an' years, an' get Jim shot full of lightnin'," Olive shuddered as she spoke. "Gettin' Jim killed won't bring Denny back."

"It'd serve Sliver good an' well right," answered Judy.

"Mebbe 'twould!" took up Olive. "But when it's done, will you have Denny back, or grandpap? . . . No, you wouldn't!"

Judy pondered a moment.

"I'd have you, Ollie," she countered.

The lame girl shook her head.

"I'd be dead too," she choked, "plumb dead."

Judy gazed at the speaker's twitching face. Had she carried the thing far enough, so not one of the three would suspect? She dared run no risk! She gritted her teeth. Denny should never come back to the farm, never!

"Can't see nothin' to be done," she said doggedly.

Olive snatched her hand.

"I can!" came through her chattering teeth. "I can! . . . Bury Denny tonight an' keep mum."

Judy staggered back. To hear her cousin make the suggestion she had expected her own lips would utter, took the strength from her legs. She shook visibly. The rain, dashing against the window only added to the horror of her quaking nerves. Then suddenly Honor's rich deep voice seemed to mingle with the throbbing elements and Olive's coarse cries.

"He will carry you through," Honor had said, and, "He will carry you through," sounded through Judy's soul like a refrain from an angelic host. Denny was safe in the Garden of Glory but these three should not know it.

"Look ever to Jesus," she said to herself to gain the strength Honor said always came with strong desire.

"What'd you say, darlin'?" wheedled Olive, wiping her eyes.

"I hate awful to bury Denny that way, Ollie," Judy faltered. "There'd be no blessin' for 'im like most brats get."

Olive squeezed the hand she held.

"Yes, there would, sure there would," she sobbed. "I'd bless him, grandpap would, an' Jim——"

"Jim ain't got no blessin' inside him to give anyone!" Judy cut her cousin's speech off angrily. "Denny can do without Jim's words! . . . Believe that!" She turned again to the door, but Olive held her with tightening grip.

"It'd be worse'n anything in the world havin' grandpap put in jail, Judy Ketchel," she pleaded. "He's old, an' sick——"

A gleam of purple shot into Judy's eyes, and Olive knowing her cousin so well, pressed on, "Nobody'll know about Denny if you don't tell . . . Grandpap, beg 'er! . . . Jim, say something!"

Judy threw up her head.

"Let Sliver so much as speak Denny's name to me, Ollie," she flung out, "an' I'll yell what he done all the way to Ithaca . . . Mebbe, I'll do what you want me to, but not because Jim asks me—but for you an' for grandpap . . . Now, set down, Ollie, you're tremblin' like a leaf . . . Get her a drink, Sliver."

All the swaggering pomposity Shuckies usually had, was gone. Obediently he went to the water pail, got a dipper of water and held it to Ollie's lips.

The girl drank thirstily.

"I couldn't stand it, Judy," she wailed finally. "I just couldn't."

"I guess you couldn't," conceded Judy. "But—but, if grandpap begs me mebbe I won't do nothin', I mean, I won't if you promise to listen to what I've got to say afterwards—just when you and me 're alone."

"I promise," gasped Olive.

"You'll swear on Denny," said Judy, faintly.

"Ya, I'll swear on anything you like," promised Olive.

Judy sat down on the floor suddenly. Her strength, that superb strength that had carried her through a terrible day, was leaving her bit by bit.

"Citizens of the World"—flashed into her mind. What a Citizen of the World meant Judy Ketchel didn't know, but she did know that something menaced Roderick Kingsland, and he was her friend. Denny in the Garden of Glory was as safe as he could be, but Kingsland was in danger. Jim had said so.

"Judy, honey," Olive besought her brokenly, "You'll do it?"

Judy shook herself rid of exhaustion and rubbed her tearless eyes with her sleeve . . . Of course! . . . But she intended doing it in her own way. Olive squatted down beside her, took her hand, and pressed it hard.

"If I do," said Judy, "it's all to go like I want!"

Olive sat up.

"Ja, just like you say, Jude dear," she monotoned. "Hey, grandpap? . . . Hey, Jim?"

A muttered affirmative fell from the men's lips. They would have promised anything, so terrified were they of the law's strong arm.

"Then I say," and Judy leaned over and gazed at Olive, "then I say," she repeated, "grandpap's——" Judy's yellow head fell a little forward but Olive pushed it back.

"Grandpap'll do anything you like, darlin'," she promised.

"Let 'im bless Denny, then," urged Judy. "Let 'im call down God's love on—on him."

"Bless Denny, granddaddy," cried Olive.

Herman Ketchel, like all cowards, would have done anything to save himself.

"Bless 'im, grandpap," ordered Judy.

"God bless Denny," mumbled grandfather Ketchel.

Judy scrambled up.

"An' say you're sorry for bein' so hellish to him," she said, going to Ketchel.

"Sorry," repeated grandpap, dully.

Judy flung around on Shuckies and Olive.

"Everything's got to go like I say," she repeated.

"Denny's got to be buried in the grave with his an' my daddy, an' you both got to help do it!"

A terrified sound came from Olive's lips, and the sweat rolled from Jim's face in large drops.

"We'll do it, Judy Ketchel," Olive agreed as she got up. "Jim'll do what you say, so'll I."

Judy sat down weakly on Denny's little stool.

"Then first put grandpap to bed," she directed.

It took a few minutes to get the little old man in his bed, and when Olive came out of grandfather's room, swaying and limping, and Jim, like a walking corpse, Judy glanced up at them.

"Nuther one of you can touch Denny," she said in a low tone. "You just go out to the graveyard an' get the place ready for him, an' I'll come along after a few minutes."

\* \* \* \* \*

Later, two people waited silently in the night's pouring rain in Rogues' Harbor graveyard. From where Olive stood she could hear Jim's teeth chattering. Her own jaws were set together as if never again to be opened. In front of them was a newly made hole in a grave at the head of which was a wooden slab.

And then there suddenly appeared directly in front of them, Judy Ketchel with a bundle in her arms.

She spoke no word—nor did she notice the man and woman. She came forward slowly, knelt down and tremblingly deposited her burden in the open hole. With her own hands she covered it up until nothing remained of the gruesome thing she buried.

"Make Daddy's grave look like it used to, Sliver," she stammered, rising.

Frantically Jim obeyed, clawing at the wet earth like

a hungry dog digs for a bone, and Olive helped him smooth the broken sod on top.

"Now both you beat it back home, an' leave me here," said Judy in smothered tones.

For a few minutes after Judy Ketchel was alone, she knelt motionless over the grave. Then, on her knees she moved stiffly through the wet grass to the head board. Leaning her face against it, she whispered,

"Daddy, I had to do it, an' I guess you helped me!  
. . . Your Denny's safe in the Garden of Glory."

After a little she got up, and stood a moment meditating. With the superstition of the unknowing, she carefully felt her way between the other graves that she might not tread on them, climbed the fence and struck off through the rain to the railroad track.

## CHAPTER XIII

### DAVID CARMEN

DAVID CARMEN, one of the most eminent physicians and surgeons in Tompkins County, pushed back his chair from the dinner table and sighed. The terror of war, brought home to Ithaca by the declaration of its sons' liability to service, had made a desperate call upon his strength. His keen dark eyes, his firmly knit hands and ever ready smile brought courage to many a patient where medicine would have failed.

Once he had said to Senator Kingsland, "A woman's nerves have to be treated as well as a man's pains," and in the last month, morning, noon and night, he had raced from place to place to give more smiles and cheering words than drugs.

"My God," he reflected, "the world needs hope instead of dope, but what can a country doctor do? . . . I guess my job's assuring the mothers of Ithaca their boys'll get to France and back again as good as ever."

He smiled whimsically to himself. "Poor little people," he murmured aloud.

The telephone bell in his study jangled suddenly.

He had hoped for a few hours' rest, but duty was duty, and work, work!

When he took off the receiver, a woman's voice, deep but imploring, talked a few moments.

"All right," said David, "I'll be there as soon as I can. A broken arm, you say? . . . Very well! . . . Can I get through the road with my car?"

Evidently he was satisfied with the answer for he hung up the receiver and went out.

A little later, he was guiding his small limousine down Aurora Street toward Fall Creek. On and on he sped, turning swiftly into the road that ran along the east



shore of the lake. With the directions he had received over the telephone in mind, he drove by McKinney's and stopped near the creek bridge. The flooded stream was running bank-full. In the gorge, beside the house he sought, the tumbled waters maintained a low, persistent roaring that permeated the other dismal noises of the stormy night.

He had often noticed the House of Mystery before—in fact, had smiled at its name and the story that a ghost kept midnight vigil within its weather-beaten walls. He'd heard, also, that for the past two years, it had been occupied.

The doctor mounted the hill, rounded a hedge and walked up the steps to the porch. At his knock, the door opened, and, medical case in hand, David Carmen stepped into a large, old-fashioned room, and came face to face with a tall woman. He took in at a glance the slenderness of her, the face, weary, but still lovely, and the white hair, piled in folds upon a shapely head.

"It was kind of you to come, Doctor Carmen," said she, "and such a dreadful night too!"

For a moment Carmen stood and looked at her in silence. Seldom had he seen such a beautiful woman. Never in Ithaca—no, nor anywhere else, for that matter! How slim and girlish she was! How hauntingly familiar, somehow!

"Rain doesn't count with a doctor," he protested. "Where's the little chap?"

Honor Lessington extended her hands for his hat and case.

"Won't you be seated a minute while I tell you something?" she asked.

The doctor removed his raincoat and gloves and took the proffered chair. He wondered how such a woman could have lived so near Ithaca and he had not seen her before. . . . Why, yes, surely he had seen her! There was about her something that took his mind back to his younger years. He tried to locate her, to fix her into the place where she belonged. She seemed frightfully

upset for she paced the long room several times. Then, halting before him, she began.

"Before I talk to you, Doctor Carmen, you must promise to be silent about what you learn to-night. . . . You can't help me otherwise."

David bowed.

"A medical man's like a priest," he rejoined gravely. "You can rest assured I shan't say anything."

He watched her twist a corner of her handkerchief nervously. She was mystifying him more and more with her strangely familiar gestures. One slow turn of her head brought her name almost to the end of his tongue.

"About here," she took up slowly, "I'm known as Mrs. Lessington, but—but—don't you remember me, Doctor Carmen?"

David's fingers threaded his hair thoughtfully. He was sure he had known her, but when and where?

"That's what I've been trying to do ever since I sat here," he meditated.

The woman made another long turn about the room. David followed her every movement, her name still baffling him.

"I must be in the secret too," she blurted out, turning upon him. "Is it a bargain?"

"Whatever you wish," acquiesced the doctor.

"In my High School days," she then explained, "I was—Claudia Ketchel."

David felt the blood rush into his face. His nerves tingled with sudden emotion. Claudia Ketchel! Of course, now, he remembered. Claudia Ketchel, who had lived as his ideal since those long ago school days. She had been but a yellow-haired girl then, and he had never thought of her otherwise, although with a quick breath, he declared to himself that even as a girl, she had not been half so lovely as now.

"I remember you very well," he replied, low-toned. "I've often wondered where you were and what had become of you."

David did not tell her how many times he'd tried to

locate her. That was his own secret—a secret of many long years.

"I married," Mrs. Lessington went on, tears gathering in her eyes, "and nothing but trouble followed. I married—Donald Ricardo—You knew him too. . . . I called *you* tonight, because—well—because you knew us both, and you're kind and good."

Never had a compliment pleased David Carmen so much. It made up for all his years of work and loneliness.

"I remember Don too," he asserted. "He was a friend of the Kingslands, wasn't he?"

"Yes. Peter Kingsland had red hair and was tall, taller than you, I imagine. But I knew you better than I did him," and she smiled wearily.

Carmen reddened, for vividly he recalled the times he had invited her to school frolics. He remembered still the stinging hurt of her refusals and his jealousy of Donald Ricardo.

"You see, I didn't move in the same circle with Don," Mrs. Lessington proceeded. "So I knew but a few of his friends. My father disliked Ithaca very much and only allowed me to go to school there because I insisted upon it."

"I understand," responded David.

She came back to him, and he noticed her agitation.

"Then quite without anyone knowing it," she faltered, "I ran away with Don and married him. He'd only just finished his first year in Cornell when we married. I wanted him to wait but he wouldn't. My father wouldn't forgive me so we went away from Ithaca and traveled about a lot. Then we went to Elmira for a while."

She stopped and struggled for composure.

"It seems, Don had given all his money matters into the hands of some Ithaca lawyer, and my husband came back here to look into his affairs, and I waited and waited for him in Elmira, but—but—Well, I don't know what did happen, for I never saw Don again until after he

had lost his memory and all his money, too. . . . Poor, poor, Denny boy!"

She was crying now, and David strangely moved, got up. Professional solicitude was joined to his personal interest.

"Sit down," he said, "and rest a moment until you feel better!"

He placed her in a large rocker and reseated himself.

"Now," he continued when she was quieter, "go on."

"Well, when I found out my father was still alive in Rogues' Harbor, I came here to help him if I could, and to find the man who robbed my husband."

"And Ricardo," ejaculated David, "you know where he is?"

Again Honor lifted the handkerchief to her eyes.

"Yes," she moaned, "he's dead!"

She paused as David acknowledged by a gesture the sympathy he felt.

"Years after I thought he had deserted me, I found him in Ovid Asylum. And because he was harmless, suffering only from a lapse of memory, the authorities gave him to me. As long as he lived, he always tried to remember the name of the lawyer in Ithaca. Then when he died," she tried to get up, but David waved her back.

"Sit still," he directed, moving his chair closer to hers.

"Then when he died," Honor repeated dully, "I came here. My father hated me so I didn't dare go to him. I hoped he'd forgive me, but he won't!"

"Then you've heard from him lately?" queried Carmen.

"Yes, through my little niece! The child doesn't know our relationship at all, but she comes here a great deal. She tells me about my father. . . . My brothers are dead. Her father was my brother, Will!"

Her voice fell on the last statement. She looked so helpless in spite of her regal bearing that a great yearning came to David to tell her how much he'd cared for

her in former days, and that, from now on, he would do his utmost to help her.

"It's unfortunate, your brothers are dead," he commented. "If one of them had lived——"

"I haven't anyone," she mourned, and again David was impelled to say something personal.

"I had to tell you all this," she stated, "because I'm so anxious, and I couldn't think of another person to call on."

Carmen smiled his broadest and stretched forth his hand instinctively.

"You did right to send for me," said he. "I'm more than glad to be of use to you."

Mrs. Lessington flushed a little.

"It does relieve me to have you here," she burst forth. "And do forgive me for crying. I'll try not to do it again. . . . Do you know my niece, Judy Ketchel?"

David shook his head doubtfully.

"I don't believe I do. But I've been over to Rogues' Harbor several times to see your father. . . . Is she lame?"

Mrs. Lessington made a negative gesture.

"No, that's Olive, my brother Oscar's daughter. You would've remembered Judy if you'd ever seen her."

"Is she rather tall, and has she yellow hair? Very pretty, but as wild as a——"

A vivid color mounting to the woman's temples broke off his statement.

"Yes, that's Judy," she said. "But, you see, the dear child's never had a chance, and I can't do as much for her as I'd like. . . . She won't let me! . . . My father's so against her coming here too. But, tonight something dreadful happened at Rogues' Harbor, and Judy brought her little brother here. . . . That's why I sent for you."

Instantly, the professional part of David asserted itself.

"Let me see him," he said curtly, and Honor, picking up the lamp, led the way to the narrow staircase.

## CHAPTER XIV

### A PROMISE

THE great clock on the Cornell Library tower boomed out the hour of ten before David Carmen had succeeded in making Denny comfortable. After the broken arm was set in splints, the boy lay quite white and haggard, but a beautiful lady fluttered about him, and gave him sweet kisses such as he had never received before except from Judy. When Doctor Carmen told his little patient he was going to give him something to make him sleep, the boy nodded.

"Mebbe Judy'll come when I wake up," he sighed.

Honor Lessington bent over him.

"Of course she will, Denny, and now like a good, dear boy, take this medicine, and you'll be well very, very soon."

"Mebbe Judy'll bring me some daisies," Denny murmured. "I love daisies, but grandpap don't!"

"I'll give you a bunch as big as this, darling," smiled Honor, making a hoop of her two arms. "Now, then, open your mouth, dear."

The boy swallowed the contents of the spoon. In spite of himself, his mouth pursed wryly.

"It were kind a good," he gulped.

The doctor's lips twitched at the corners as if he were going to smile. He knew the dose Denny had swallowed was as bitter as gall. A sense of admiration swept over him.

"You're a fine, brave boy," he commended, "a good boy, too!"

Denny's eyes flashed open, and he looked up into Carmen's face.

"I'm a Yankee soldier," he breathed, "an' when my



arm gets well I'm goin' to fight the Germans. Judy says they're the hellishest folks livin'. That's why I'm goin' to fight 'em."

"Good!" applauded David. "Now go to sleep."

For some time, while Denny lay very quiet, the man and woman were silent.

"He's asleep," said Carmen, at length, "and the pain's gone for tonight."

Honor Lessington led the way downstairs into the sitting room where she invited the doctor to be seated. An embarrassed silence fell over them while Honor filled in the minutes with useless, little movements about the room.

"I can't express my gratitude, Doctor Carmen," she began presently.

"You needn't," he interrupted almost brusquely. "Did you say the boy's sister was coming back to-night?"

Mrs. Lessington made assent with a bend of her head. She couldn't have explained why she was embarrassed, but she was. Perhaps that strange feeling had something to do with her companion, and the explanations she'd been making, and to the expression she'd caught on his face when he looked at her.

"Judy said she'd come if she could," she replied in low tones, "but it's raining and getting late. Possibly she won't be back before morning."

"I'll wait, anyway," announced Carmen.

"But I can't let you stay here when I know you're tired out," returned Honor, hastily. "I'm sure I can get along. You say Denny'll sleep 'til morning? Please, please go now"—she went close to him—"and I'll promise to call you if I need you."

"I'm going to stay a while," said David, obstinately. "Do you mind if I smoke?"

"Of course not!" murmured Honor.

The cigar in the doctor's mouth was burning nicely, and Mrs. Lessington sat with her hands folded in her lap when another quarter of an hour made known its

flight by the booming of the University clock. Honor felt almost sure Judy Ketchel would return unless prevented at Rogues' Harbor, and her heart filled with vague fears for the girl.

Added to this apprehension was the fact that she didn't know anything about what had happened at Ketchel's. All she'd been able to tell Doctor Carmen was that Judy had made a wild entrance to her home with the unconscious child, and as suddenly departed.

"I guess every boy in the Ithaca High School asked you to marry him," David broke forth presently.

Honor stared at him, then colored.

"Oh, no, not by any means," she declared.

David's dark eyes were centered on her contemplatively. The expression in them made her quite flustered.

"Well, Walt Comstock did . . ." he began.

Honor tried to interrupt him, but David pressed on.

"At least, Walt said he did, and I know I did, now didn't I? And you married Don, so there's three within my knowledge."

He looked at her so steadily that again the crimson flood swept to her hair.

"We were all young then," she excused sadly. "Now I'm old——"

"Oh, not so old," said David. "You're not as old as I am, and I don't count myself aged by any means!"

A shrill little trill from the Garden of Glory sounded through the room.

"That's Judy," ejaculated Honor, starting up.

At that moment a pair of bare feet bounded upon the steps. The door opened, and Judy Ketchel came in.

"Awful rain," was how she excused her boisterous entrance, and the bang of the door. Her eyes fell on David Carmen. "Oh, you're here!—I'm awful glad. You fixed Denny up? . . . Huh?"

She looked so white, so tired that David got suddenly to his feet. Such a night for a girl to be out in, and Judy was soaked, wet to the skin!

"Yes, and I'm going to fix you up too," he assured her. "My God, child, you look ready to faint."

Judy waved her hand toward him and spoke to Mrs. Lessington, overlooking the doctor's statement about herself.

"Did you make 'im promise?" she asked huskily. "Did he say he'd never tell?"

"Yes, I promised her," broke in Carmen, "but I can't see how you're going to carry the thing out. Your people'll find out where the boy is. Denny will be missed, of course."

"Nope, he won't," contradicted the girl, "an' as long as my Lady an' me have your promise, I'll tell you something else. . . . Set down again."

"When you do," said Doctor Carmen, gravely.

Judy glanced at the dainty chairs.

"I'm all wet," she made excuse. "My clothes 're soaked, an' I've got to get away quick. . . . I'll stand."

The doctor pushed a little rocker toward her, and Mrs. Lessington gently forced her into it. David Carmen never forgot that scene. In later times, he liked to think of the picture, a lovely, white-haired woman kissing a rain-soaked, curly-haired girl.

"What do I care for a little water, Judy darling?" protested Honor. "There! . . . Now tell us just what happened. I've been so anxious, and Doctor Carmen wants to know, too."

Her elbow propped on her knees, Judy leaned forward, her small chin in the palm of her hand.

"I've been worried too, ma'm," she commenced, "but the worst is over, I guess. You needn't be worried about grandpap missin' Denny, because——" she looked around the room, listened, and went on hurriedly, "grandpap an' Olive think Denny's dead an' buried, so does Sliver Jim."

Both Doctor Carmen and Honor Lessington got up. What dreadful thing had that girl, drooping so wearily, told them? Judy didn't move out of her chair. She only glanced gravely from the man to the woman.

"It's God's truth," she nodded. "First I thought I couldn't do it, it was so awful. But 'twas that, or Denny'd die, so I done it."

Honor Lessington's hands came together in spasmodic appeal.

"You did what, dearest? . . . Oh, Judy, darling, tell us, do tell us all that happened."

"I'm goin' to if you'll give me time," panted the girl, swaying forward, "but I'm that dead beat out, I'm near choked with runnin'."

Doctor Carmen hurriedly prepared and forced Judy to swallow a bracing potion.

"Now, be quiet a minute," he said kindly, running his hand over her hair, "just rest, dear child!"

Rest! Oh, what a word, what a wonderful word for Judy Ketchel to hear. David Carmen's tenderness drew a rain of tears from her eyes, and she clung to his hand passionately.

"If you'll only help Denny," she sobbed. "Mebbe, I won't ever ask another favor as long as I live."

"I've already helped him, and he's asleep upstairs," the doctor told her. "He won't suffer much more. . . . I won't let him. . . . Now try and be quiet, my dear! . . . Mrs. Lessington and I want to know just what happened."

The doctor drew two chairs forward, one for himself and one for the trembling woman. When they were seated, Judy began at the beginning of that dreadful tale, omitting nothing but the visit of Senator Kingsland.

"I'd have give the money to grandpap a hundred times over ruther'n have him an' Jim do what they did to Denny," she explained. "Him and Sliver almost killed the baby."

Mrs. Lessington bent forward breathlessly.

"Sliver Jim!" she interrupted. "He's that terrible man you've told me about, Judy! The man who wants you to marry him?"

"Yep, but he'll never marry me! Not now, he won't."

If he marries a Ketchel, it'll be Ollie. I got him right there." She lifted her hand and pressed one thumb down upon her wet skirt. "I hated awful to see granddaddy shake so, but what could I do? Both him and Sliver 're so scared they don't know black from white. They think they killed Denny, they do, an' they'll go on a thinkin' it, an' I hope Sliver'll be haunted always for the dirty work he done tonight." She thought a moment and looked up under heavy lashes. "I guess," she offered simply, "I guess I don't want Denny hauntin' grandpap. He's so old an' skinny! Why! a real, live ghost would send him into a fit you'd never bring 'im out of, Doctor Carmen."

Honor, weeping softly, had no strength to make a reply.

"Don't cry, please mam," entreated Judy. "I'm sorry to hurt you, but I ain't told all of it yet, an' I got to hurry. . . . It was some knock on the head for 'em when I walked in the kitchen an' said, 'You killed Denny, you dirty duffers, now what you goin' to do about it?'"

Both David and Honor, horrified, got up again.

"Might as well keep settin'," observed Judy, "because there's more to tell! You see, Denny was already here an' I couldn't let 'em know it. Grandpap would a killed me if I had. . . . Why don't both you set down again? . . . Go on an' set, will you?"

Mrs. Lessington sank back, and Doctor Carmen, his serious eyes on the girl, sat on the edge of his chair and leaned toward her.

"Then," went on Judy, "I give 'em a good scare about gettin' in jail, an' about the chair with the lightnin' runnin' through it. . . . You know what I mean?"

Honor's face became livid, and David groaned.

"I never heard anything like it," he averred, but he said nothing further, waiting for Judy to continue.

"Then I said again, 'Denny's dead!' An' Ollie hollered an' cried an' begged me not to put grandpap in jail, nor to get Jim killed, an' after a while I said——"

Again the yellow head went forward a little in extreme fatigue.

"Yes, yes," queried Doctor Carmen.

"Then I said," repeated Judy, "'If I keep mum Denny's got to be buried tonight with his daddy in Rogues' Harbor graveyard.'"

After a frightful pause, during which the rain pattered at the windows, and the wind moaned in the willow trees, Judy finished, "Then I done it! Only it wasn't Denny I put in the grave with my daddy, Bill Ketchel."

"Oh, Judy, little Judy, how terrible!" cried Honor, and David Carmen fell back speechless.

"You think that's awful, I 'spose, both of you people do, eh?" the girl groaned. "Well, so 'tis! . . . but not so awful as seein' a baby get beat with a stick an' havin' his bones busted!"

Another wail broke from Honor Lessington. Judy stood up.

"Well's that's all!" she said. "Now, I'm goin'! I'll come tomorrow an' see Denny. . . . Tell 'im, will you? . . . You needn't be cryin' any tears over me, mam, for grandpap won't hit me for many a day to come. He was that bowled over, Ollie put him to bed, an' Sliver's as scared as a Jack rabbit. I'm goin' along now!"

Mrs. Lessington threw an importunate glance at Doctor Carmen.

"She mustn't go back," said she.

"I should think not," agreed Carmen, gruffly.

"An' I think yes," persisted Judy. "It's like this——" She advanced between the man and woman looking first at one and then at the other with eyes unnaturally bright. "Grandpap'd starve if I wasn't there! He's as cussed an old German as ever yelped for the Fatherland, but—but I ain't goin' to leave 'im ever."

"But your cousin, Olive, dear?" ventured Honor. "You've often told me your—your grandfather likes her better than he does you!"

"An' that's true, as true as any word you ever spoke, only—only Olive don't like grandpap as well's as I do,



an' she'd let 'im get cold when he sleeps. He's always fallin' asleep an' dreamin' about Aunt Claudy."

"Great God!" exclaimed David.

"Most folks think grandpap's the meanest man livin'," said Judy, "but he ain't when he sleeps. Why, when grandpap's asleep, he's as pretty as a angel, an' he talks like one, too."

She went swiftly to Honor and thrust out her hands.

"Didn't you tell me, ma'm," she implored, "that some day he'd be better if I kept a sayin' an' thinkin' Jesus would carry him through? Didn't you tell me that?" she managed to repeat.

"Yes, dear, yes, and it's true, Judy!"

"An' I'm doin' it! That's how I got Denny out, just sayin' over an' over, 'Look ever to Jesus, an' He'll carry you through.' That's how I got the grit to dump in my daddy's grave a bunch of old truck Ollie and Jim thought was the baby."

She turned swiftly to Doctor Carmen.

"Be as good as you can to Denny, mister, an' mebbe you'll have to come an' see grandpap tomorrow. He was pretty nigh used up when I left home. . . . I got to go now—goodbye."

She crossed the room, flung her arms about Honor's neck and kissed her. The woman tried to hold her, but the girl dragged herself away.

Then she went back to Carmen's side, snatched one of his hands, bent the yellow, wet head and with twitching lips placed a warm, damp kiss upon it. Then she was out of the door before Doctor Carmen or Mrs. Lessington could stop her.

"Oh, God, how perfectly frightful!" moaned Honor.

David Carmen went to her, and took her hands in his.

"Claudia," he murmured. . . .

"No, no, don't call me that! Even Donald forgot I was Claudia. He insisted my name was Honor and since then I've never changed it!"

"Then, Honor," said David, "don't, dear, don't cry!"

We'll help them some way. . . . There, dear! Oh, my dearest—dearest dear!”

She heard his words, of course, but was only conscious of how comforting they were. It didn't seem out of place after all this lapse of years that this man should call her “dear.”

“My father, my poor old father,” she grieved. “Oh, I must go to him right away! I'll explain the whole horrible situation to him——”

“Not yet,” advised David. “Your sudden appearance might kill him. . . . Tomorrow I'll go and see him, and I promise you, dearest——”

There! He had called her “dearest” again, and she had not resented it the least bit. How strong, how capable he was!

“Tomorrow I'll go to Rogues' Harbor,” David repeated gently, “and Judy, you needn't worry about her! . . . Just think what she'd done tonight. Now you must rest, sweet woman, dear! . . . I'll drop in and see you tomorrow.”

## CHAPTER XV

### A VISIT IN THE NIGHT

THE relief and fatigue Judy felt on leaving the House of Mystery made her drop under a rose bush near the gate. She crouched down, unmindful of the rain and wind, and cried a little as a child cries when it's tired. Nothing mattered now that Denny was safe . . .

Suddenly, out of the recesses of memory, words not intended for her ears leapt at her. She hadn't considered going to Ithaca that night—not until this moment when Jim's drunken words, "Citizens of the World," forced themselves upon her. She lifted her skirt and wiped the tears from her face. The way to Ithaca was long, but never, never would she forgive herself if she went back to Rogues' Harbor then and anything happened to her friend.

She crawled from under the bush, quietly opened the gate, and in two minutes more she was lost in the darkness that stretched like a sky-wide shawl between the Garden of Glory and Ithaca.

It seemed an eternity before she reached the town. All the houses were dark, and for some moments Judy stood at the north end of Tioga Street wondering how she could find Kingsland Court. A little farther up she saw a glow of light shining on the wet pavement and made her way toward it. On the front of the red-brick building she spelled out "Fire House." A huge door was open and Judy ventured in. Several men were seated in armchairs. At the sight of the girl, they ceased talking.

Judy threw an embarrassed glance around upon them. "Please would one of you misters be awful kind an' tell me where Kingsland Court is?" she stammered.

For a few seconds no one answered her. Then one man got up and walked to where she stood.

"Sure, I'll tell you, pretty kid," he said. "But it's quite

a stretch and a bad night besides. Now, if you want the shortest way, that's through the graveyard!"

Judy shivered. She'd had enough of graveyards for one night.

"I'd rather go the long way!" she murmured.

She looked so tired, so utterly exhausted that the man took great pains to direct her.

At length, after struggling up the hill, she paused at the entrance of Kingsland Court, far back of which stood a stately mansion towering over the sleeping city. The great iron gate was closed, but Judy wriggled under it. She followed the winding flag walks leading to the house for what seemed to her a great distance. At the foot of the long flight of stone steps she halted to consider how best to reach Roderick Kingsland. On tiptoe, she mounted the stairs to the wide verandah, and started with joy when she saw a glimmer of light beside a drawn curtain. The window faced the porch, and Judy crept toward it and put her eye to the place where the yellow ray filtered out into the night. From her point of vantage she could see Senator Kingsland sitting at a table. She couldn't see anyone else, but he was making queer motions with his hands. She couldn't make out what he was doing. That didn't matter much, though. All she wanted was to whisper her warning and go home.

\* \* \* \*

Meanwhile, inside the room, Senator Kingsland was playing a game of chess with his grandson.

"Checkmate, old man," called the Senator, leaning back.

Teddy bent forward studying the chess men.

"It's checkmate, all right," he conceded. "Graddy, that's the first game you've won in two weeks."

Kingsland laughed.

"Your mind was somewhere else tonight, son," he remarked. "No matter! . . . You can afford to let me have a game now and then . . . Ted, I imagine you're thinking of the whack you'd like to give the Germans over in France."

Teddy colored to the roots of his red hair. He hadn't been thinking any such thing, but continually through the intricate moving of the stately kings, queens, bishops and knights, he had been saying over and over to himself, "I never saw such blue eyes. I wonder who she is!"

He was thankful his grandfather hadn't guessed correctly the reason for his preoccupation.

"No, I wasn't thinking about the war at all, Graddy," he confessed. "I'll wait for that 'til the pater comes home, seeing you want me to . . . What do you say to another game?"

Senator Kingsland consented instantly. It would be one more hour of escape from the lonely vigil with the ghost-boy standing there by the fireplace.

As Teddy reset the chess men, he wanted to ask if his grandfather knew any Germans down below McKinney's, but even that question might be encroaching upon the promise he'd given the girl that late afternoon.

"Graddy," he broke forth, after a while, "what color hair do you like best? Yellow? Now, don't you?"

Senator Kingsland looked at his grandson whimsically.

"Just now, dear boy," he laughed affectionately, "I think I'm specially enamored of red hair . . . Why?"

Teddy sighed.

"Well, I been thinking lately," he ran on, "I mean very lately, that I like yellow hair better than any other color." Then in confusion he laughed too and ran his fingers through his shock of red curls. "Oh, now I see what you mean," he grinned. "I've got red hair, and Daddy has too . . . Is that it?"

"You guessed it, Ted," smiled Kingsland.

Again Teddy drew a long breath.

"I'd like to play chess all night, Graddy," he said gloomily. "I couldn't sleep! . . . I suppose it's the war, and the pater being over there with that infernal crowd of assassins. The fact is, I want to enlist, and if my father——"

Just then three distinct taps came on the window. Both men were on their feet instantly.

Senator Kingsland's gaze sought the fireplace, where Donald Ricardo's unswerving blue eyes were upon him. It couldn't have been in his own imagination that he'd heard those raps.

"Did you hear—that, Ted?" he asked in a low tone.

"Yes! I heard something! And there it is again," replied the boy. "Some one's at the window."

Without a moment's delay, Teddy strode forward. A quick jerk at the curtain cord and the window pane came within view of both men. Teddy could see plainly a figure standing on the porch. He flung up the window, stretched forth his hand and helped Judy Ketchel into the room.

At the sight of her, Roderick Kingsland sank back in his chair. The unforeseen always frightened him. His mind raced through a maze of conjectures, trying to determine what terrible calamity was hanging over him.

The boy and girl, utterly unmindful of the old man, stared at each other. Of course, Judy hadn't anticipated seeing Teddy, and her unexpected appearance just when thoughts of her were uppermost in his mind, thickened Teddy's tongue until it clove to the roof of his mouth. Judy didn't know what to do or say.

She moved a step or two nearer the Senator, and tried to smile, but her livid face was almost grotesque in its extreme fatigue.

"I'm here," was what she got out at last.

With all the force he could muster, Kingsland straightened in his chair. For an instant he wondered if the speaker could feel the nearness of the ghost that had moved swiftly to her side.

"I see you're here," he murmured, almost inarticulately. He wanted to say something else, to ask her what had brought her from Rogues' Harbor, but there was Teddy standing looking at them, his red-brown eyes filled with wonder and apprehension.

"Won't you sit down?" he invited, and the warmth in



his tones and the new emotion he had brought into her heart made her utter a sobbing gasp.

"Nope," she faltered, glancing up at Theodore. "I come to see him." She pointed her finger at Senator Kingsland. Teddy turned to go, but the girl's slender tanned hand touched his sleeve. "'Tain't nothin' about you," she went on distinctly, "but I got to tell him something. Please don't think I'm sendin' you away, but, but——"

Senator Kingsland managed to stand up.

"My grandson doesn't mind leaving us alone for a few minutes," he said abruptly.

"No, no, of course not," said Teddy, bewildered.

Crowding into his mind pressed a confused throng of recollections and suspicions. What could she want of his grandfather? He was eaten up with a desire to ask her questions, but he was too well bred to linger where he wasn't wanted.

Judy saw him move toward the door.

"Wait a minute," she said unsteadily, and he turned back.

In spite of the weariness visible in her face, an adorable purple had crept into her eyes and about the twitching mouth a smile lurked. The boy felt a sudden choking impulse to decline to leave the room. She'd go away soon, perhaps back to McKinney's, and it was dark, late, and the storm was raging even more furiously than in the afternoon. His steps toward Judy, and Judy's impulsive movement toward him brought them very close.

"What I got to say to him's a secret," she said, with a backward motion toward Kingsland. "Nobody else can hear it. . . . See?"

From his great height, Teddy looked down upon her, his eyes holding her imploring blue gaze for some seconds.

"I never tell secrets," he then stated meaningly.

"I know it. Oh, I know that!" averred Judy. "I guess you'd have your tongue tore out before you'd tell something you promised you wouldn't."

The hidden purport of her words was clear to the boy,

and he wondered afterward why his grandfather seemed not to notice the conversation.

Senator Kingsland was so conscious of the spirit of Ricardo, glaring at him, so anxious to get his grandson out of the room before some horrid secret were disclosed, that he was able to consider nothing else.

"Thank you awful much for goin'," said Judy in a smothered voice. "I'll be out of here in two minutes, then you can come back again."

"Yes, thanks, dear boy," added Kingsland quickly.

Teddy was willing to leave the room, but he didn't want her to go away in two minutes. His hesitation brought a decided request from Senator Kingsland.

"Go, son dear," he insisted.

Then Teddy went out, and in silence both Judy and Senator Kingsland heard the boy run swiftly upstairs. For thirty seconds or so Judy stood where Teddy had left her, only now she'd centered her gaze on her companion. She noted his pallor and went to him with swift footsteps.

"Set down again," she directed. "I wouldn't 've come 'til tomorrow, but I didn't dare wait. . . . You look just half dead!"

Kingsland fell into the chair and wiped the drops of perspiration from his brow.

"I am!" he sighed dismally. "Your grandfather, I mean Herman Ketchel, what did he do after I left today?"

The girl made a motion of indifference with her hand.

"No matter about that! Grandpap does what he likes 'most always, an' I ain't sayin' nothin' against 'im. I come here to warn you—to tell you——"

Kingsland gaped at her.

"To tell me what?" he broke out.

Judy went over to him and bent her face down close to his. The steam from her wet curls rose to the man's nostrils.

"The Citizens of the World," she stammered. "You know 'em, huh?"

"Citizens of the World," echoed Kingsland in the same low tones. "What about them?"

Terror was written on the girl's face, bewilderment on the man's.

"Nothin' much," muttered Judy, "that is, I mean, I don't know! Only they're Germans, an' I heard one of 'em say tonight, you was goin' to be killed. So I come a hustlin' here to tell you 'bout it. Germans 're awful wicked folks when they're real Germans."

Kingsland glanced over the girl, his eyes taking in her shivering body and bare feet.

"You need care more than I do, child," he groaned. "You're soaking wet."

Judy flung up her yellow head.

"A little water won't hurt me none," she protested. "I don't mind!"

At that moment, Roderick Kingsland was nearer blurt-ing out his confession than he ever had been before, nearer than when the birds huddled their fluttering, feathered bodies upon her, nearer even than when, that afternoon, he had seen Herman Ketchel's cane almost reach her slender, brown legs.

Again, as at other times, when his resolution to right the wrongs he'd done, was strong in him, the hard blue eyes of the spectral Ricardo softened, even assumed a kindly expression. He must tell her. He opened his mouth to speak but suddenly, before his mental vision, stood the haughty Peter, his son! Peter, the wonderful! Down upon the end of his tongue came his teeth, and again the avenging blue eyes glared upon him angrily.

"They're layin' for you, mister," Judy continued, almost in a whisper. "I'm goin' back to grandpap's in a minute, but I said, an' I'm sayin' again, watch out for them Citizens of the World!"

She grew ghastly white as she whispered the last words, and the terrified glances she threw about her were evidence enough to Kingsland that she knew more than she'd told him.

"And these people——" he thrust in, "my God, child,

can't you tell me more about them? Who they are and what you heard?"

Grandpap's thin, wrinkled face rose before her, and Judy shook her head.

"I can't tell you any more, mister. Only, I know some men 're after you for helpin' France and England, an' they're the kind of folks who stab a feller in the back. . . . Face front you can fight, I say, but when a duffer slips up an' gives you one from behind, there ain't no chance to get away. . . . Now, there ain't, is there?"

"But explain where you heard it, Judy," begged Kingsland. "And who are the Citizens of the World?"

"Germans," fell from Judy's lips. "Just plain, hellish Germans. . . . That's all I know."

"And you heard one of them say I was to be attacked?" asked Kingsland quaking.

"That you was to be killed," corrected the girl. "Oh, can't you see I wouldn't a come here in the rain if I hadn't been almost scared out of my wits for you?"

Her voice caught in her throat, and she grasped at the table edge for support. The room was so warm and her clothing so wet that her head grew giddy.

She wanted to tell him, oh, how very much she wanted to tell him the whole terrible tale, everything that had happened from the time he had left the farmhouse until that moment. But there was grandpap, and there was Olive, . . . Olive, yes, and granddaddy too, were Citizens of the World, whatever that meant, and they belonged to her by right of blood.

Sliver Jim went through her whirling brain like an evil spirit. To save her good, good friend there, she'd have told on Jim, but, of course, she couldn't do that without revealing Olive's knowledge too. She was silent so long, and looked so miserable that Kingsland caught her hand and held it.

"Tell me, little girl," he entreated, "do tell me! You can trust me, can't you?"

Judy nodded.

"Sure I can trust you!" she answered moodily. "But I only know this much, an' that I'll tell you! The folks wantin' to get at you 're wicked! . . . Just wicked! . . . They're holdin' up the Fatherland with both hands, just like this."

Up went one arm as high as it could go.

"I'm just askin' you to be careful," she urged, dropping her arm wearily, "because them folks always hit the old and the weak. I'll promise another thing too. If I hear any more I'll come an' tell you. I'm goin' now!"

She walked toward the window which was still open, but Kingsland's peremptory "Wait," made her turn.

"Tell me what Ketchel said after I went out today," he commanded.

Judy considered a moment, then shook her curls.

"I can't," she asserted, "but it wasn't grandpap who said that about the Citizens of the World!"

Kingsland's courage was coming back to him by leaps and bounds. He couldn't let the child go away in her condition—not into the storm, with the miles of night gloom to Rogues' Harbor stretching before her. He got out of his chair stiffly. The past few moments had told strangely upon his strength.

"Judy," he pleaded, coming forward, "Judy, listen a moment."

The purple creeping into her eyes made him a little happier.

"I'm listenin' " was all she said.

"Will you leave Rogues' Harbor?" he began. "Will you let me——"

Kingsland couldn't find just what he wanted to offer, for again serious Peter loomed before him.

"Will you go to school somewhere, away from Ithaca?"

At the commencement of his speech, Judy dropped her eyes, but as he finished, she looked up at him.

School! he had said. To learn all the beautiful things Honor Lessington knew! That would be glorious! Her under lip trembled as she thought of grandpap, of his help-

lessness, and of Denny in the Garden of Glory. They needed her more than she needed schooling. Who'd cover granddaddy up in the winter when he was dreaming of his little girl? Who'd take care of Denny after his broken arm was healed?

"You need to study, child," Kingsland put in eagerly. "You're young, and very pretty. Mr. Ketchel has another granddaughter." Kingsland could not bring himself to go on. The blue-eyed ghost was staring him straight in the face.

Judy shook her head.

"I can't leave Rogues' Harbor! I've got to stay there, but before I get out of the window again promise me you'll be kind of careful of yourself. Don't go out nights, an' keep your curtains down tight. . . . I'd be ever so much happier if you'd say you would."

"Then of course, I will my dear," answered Kingsland. "I'll be careful, but what you say is very mysterious."

"It's all awful," flared Judy, "terrible awful, but—but——"

"But what?"

"Why, why, you see, I've sort of got to lovin' you, like I do my Lady," faltered Judy, "an' to think anything might happen to you almost kills me."

No wonder tears smarted Kingsland's lids. This ignorant child he'd wronged was so simply telling her love for him!

"Don't. Don't," he cried. "I'm not good, oh, my God, what have I done?"

Judy's purple eyes sparkled.

"You've done nothin' but the best," she smiled, "that's what you've done." While she was at his side, Kingsland noticed the dimples come back into her cheeks for a fleeting moment, but a sudden seriousness overspread the white, drawn, young face, and Judy's smile was lost in a pallor that made her look older and almost desperate.

"You remember what I said to you, mister," she said softly. "Keep a watch out for the Citizens of the World—



an' look ever to Jesus, an' He'll carry you through."

She fled to the window and stepped out. Then she turned and thrust her curly head just inside the room.

"Mebbe you think what I say about Jesus carryin' you through ain't so, but 'tis," she flashed. "I've tried it. See?"

A few minutes later Roderick Kingsland closed the window and drew the curtain carefully over the misty panes of glass.

## CHAPTER XVI

### "RATTLE YOUR BONES"

It was long past midnight when, without a moment's hesitation, Judy opened the door of the Ketchel farmhouse and stepped into the kitchen. One swift glance told her Shuckies was still there and she saw Olive in grandpap's chair, her head bent forward on her hands. The girl raised a white, worn face as Judy shut the door.

"Me an' Jim thought you never was comin' back, Jude," she complained. "What in Heaven's name made you stay all this time in the buryin' ground? . . . The hull house's filled with ghosts an' things."

Judy didn't speak to the man, slouched back in his chair.

"Have you been in to look at grandpap, Ollie?" she questioned.

The lame girl shook her head.

"Nope, he's yelled out a lot of times, but we ain't been near him. . . . The hall's as black's a pocket, and nuther Jim nor me ain't any likin' for meetin' the powers of darkness tonight." Olive had straightened a little as she spoke, but immediately sank down again. "Gott, it's been awful!"

"I 'spose it has," allowed Judy, unconcernedly.

Then she passed through the kitchen and into her grandfather's bedroom. The flickering gleam from the smoky lamp gave forth enough rays to show her the old man almost doubled up in his bed. She leaned over him. His glazed eyes stared up at her, and he blinked his lids several times before he recognized her. When he did, he caught at her hand.

"Judy," he gasped, "Judy Ketchel, have you been tellin' anyone about Denny? . . . Where you been?"

She seated herself on the edge of the bed.

"Outdoors!" she replied. "Nope, grandpap, I ain't told anyone. . . . Lordy, but you're cold!"

"Awful cold," he shivered, "an' nobody's bring me my pipe. I hollered, I bet, fifty times, but Ollie just told me to shut up."

Judy disengaged her hand from the stiff old fingers.

"I'll get your pipe," she promised. "No, don't sit up, grandpap! . . . There! Now, your pillow's more comfy. Be a good grandpap an' keep covered up!"

She turned, but Ketchel caught at her hand again.

"Don't go away, Judy! Don't, not yet!" he begged.

Judy's heart thumped with gladness. Was grandfather Ketchel beginning to love her a little? Would the ghastly secret between them draw them nearer together? He looked so wizened and shriveled, and terrified, that tears sprang to her eyes.

"Grandpap," she stammered, "don't you like me a weenty teenty bit?"

"Nein," grunted Ketchel. "Gott in Himmel, I hate you. . . Always have an' always will."

Disappointed to the heart of her, Judy turned away.

"Wait a minute," she said huskily, "I'll get your pipe."

Grandpap twisted on his pillow. He'd have his pipe now if Judy said so. The Ketchels knew she always kept her word.

The girl went back to the kitchen.

"You might have give the poor old thing his pipe, one of you lazy duffers," she snapped in an ugly voice. "An' you, Ollie, stir about an' make grandpap some tea." She went toward Jim threateningly. "You get him another pipe, Sliver. He busted his old one. They're on the shelf behind you. Then light it an' give it to me. Stir, both of you, or I'll whack you good."

Olive and Shuckies stared at the speaker in amazement. They'd been in the habit of bullying Judy and were used to seeing her submit to all kinds of imposition, but that day was passed. This wild-eyed creature before them was threatening to beat them, and she looked quite capable of doing it, too.

"Rattle your bones, both of you," she cried, "or I'll get

grandpap's cane an' paste you with it! An' if I do it," she continued relentlessly, "I'll thump you each twice on my own account, three times for grandpap, an' mor'n that for Denny!"

Olive moaned, and Jim struggled to his feet.

"Fix the tea, Ollie," ordered Judy, more quietly, "an' give me the pipe, Jim."

In another two minutes, she was back in the bedroom bending over Ketchel.

"Here's your pipe, grandpap," she said. "Now drag on it, and you'll feel better. Ollie's makin' you some tea."

Ketchel took the pipe, but his hand trembled so that Judy had to guide its stem to his lips. He puffed until the tobacco was burning freely, and the soothing taste of the smoke was on his tongue.

"Ollie's a good girl, makin' her granddaddy some tea," he mumbled.

Judy watched him in choking silence. She was starved for an expression of affection from this thin, little, old man. When she turned and left the room, grandpap was wrapped in clouds of smoke that circled about his withered face in dingy, gray rings.

Her cousin had the tea caddy in her hand when Judy came into the kitchen.

"Make the tea strong, Ollie," she said. "Grandpap's shakin' with nerves. Then you go to bed. You look's if you'd been drawed through a knot hole! . . . An' you'd best be gettin' home, Sliver. It's late! Beat it!"

Instead of moving, the farmer slunk farther down in his chair. Olive limped to his side and placed her hand on his shoulder.

"Let 'im stay, Judy," she entreated. "Please, let 'im stay!"

Judy glanced from Shuckies to her cousin.

"Why'll I let 'im stay?" she inquired. "He's no good here, is he? He ought a been home long ago. It makes me so mad I could beat you both for lettin' poor old grandpap cry like a kid for his pipe, an' a drink of tea. . . . You'd best get out, Sliver."

Olive's fingers tightened on Jim, and the man put up his hand and covered them.

"He's afraid, Judy Ketchel," quavered Olive. "Jim's most scared to death. There ain't a spot around Rogues' Harbor that ain't got a ghost in it tonight. . . . He's scared to death, I tell you!"

"What if he is?" taunted Judy. "He's got a right to be scared. I 'spose he thinks Denny'll haunt him!"

Olive began to cry.

"'Twere grandpap's fault, the hull thing," she burst in. "Jim told me so!"

Judy felt again that almost irresistible desire to strike the sneak hiding behind her cousin's frail body.

"Jim's a liar," she retorted. "He's always been a liar, Sliver has. Mebbe a person can't help the way he's born, but I've told you once an' I tell you again, that Sliver's a liar when he says grandpap done the dirty deed tonight. Denny's broke arm was on Jim's side—the arm Jim was a holdin'."

"Oh, Judy Ketchel!" trembled Olive in despair.

"You needn't Judy Ketchel me, Ollie! I was here when Denny was hurt an' you wasn't. . . . After this, things 're goin' around here like I say. I'm runnin' this shanty from now on, an' I'll tell both you folks if you don't let grandpap alone, I'll out with the truth about Denny."

She turned her glittering eyes on Sliver Jim.

"What with hectorin' granddaddy about gettin' married to me, 'Sliver," she went on in a lower tone, "an' aidin' him in his filthy work amongst men just like you, you've made his life miserable. Now, it'll stop because I'll stop it, see? . . . He wouldn't a been half so onnery to me nor Denny, if it hadn't been for you two. . . . Now, get your hat and scoot, Jim!"

"He's afraid of ghosts, I tell you, Judy!" protested Olive. "Oh, Judy, darlin', if you'll let 'im stay 'til daylight—Oh, God! just let 'im stay 'til dawn breaks."

All at once Judy's rage left her as a useless garment is cast aside. Olive loved Sliver Jim! For the first time in her life, she had some comprehension of her cousin's feel-

ing. This realization caused a slight flush in her own cheeks, and brought to her mind the recollection of a lad with red curls and kindly red-brown eyes.

“Then let ’im stay,” she muttered, drawing a long breath, “but he’s about as much a man as my Poot-cat. Get a hump on you, Ollie, an’ gimme that tea for grandpap.”

Ketchel was still pulling on his pipe when Judy went into the bedroom. She put the teapot and cup down on the little table and bent over the bed.

“Lemme have the clay now, granddaddy,” she said gently. “You’re goin’ to drink some tea.”

“Can I have the pipe when I get done with the tea, Judy?” whined Ketchel.

His voice was like a child’s, worsted at play, and his lined, old face was pathetic to see.

Judy Ketchel’s heart contracted in pain. To have put her arm around him, to have hugged the doddering, old head to her bosom would have been joy to her. But grandpap hated her! Not only tonight but many other times, he had told her that. Her kisses to him would have been gall—bitter indeed. Without remark she held the saucer to Ketchel’s lips, and he supped the dark tea greedily.

“My pipe now,” he whimpered. “Can’t I have my pipe, Judy?”

“Sure,” assented Judy, “but drink a little more tea, grandpap, a drop or two, that’s all!”

While she held the dish to Ketchel’s lips, her thoughts flew to Kingsland Court where a tall boy had called her friend, “graddy.” How sweet, the memory of that word! Judy would have loved to have said it ever so softly to grandpap, but somehow it didn’t seem to fit grandfather Ketchel. After he’d taken all the tea in the pot, Judy lighted his pipe for him and sat down beside the bed. An idea had become fixed in her mind. Grandpap, like Senator Kingsland, needed to be “carried through.” At this moment, when he looked so old, so feeble, with the pungent smoke rising about him, Judy realized his need the more. When the pipe had guttered out its fire, she put it on the



table. She didn't leave the room but sat down again. His eyes were looking into hers almost unblinkingly. She reached out and touched his cold fingers. His head moved restlessly on the pillow, and he pulled his hand away with childish impatience.

"Don't be maulin' me, Judy," he grumbled. "What're you sittin' there starin' at me like I was a wild beast for?"

She leaned over him, a wild desire to say some comforting words pervading her whole being.

"I wasn't," she answered tenderly. "Only, only, grandpap, I thought you might like to have me tell you something."

"Go ahead," said the old man, querulously.

"It's about something a lady told me once," said Judy.

Ketchel partly rose on his elbow.

"You mean the witch in the haunted house, eh, Judy?"

"It'll help you, grandpap," she insisted.

"Don't tell it," objected grandfather Ketchel. "I don't league with no devils. That woman's made you cussed ugly, Jude, ever since you been goin' to 'er. You can't fool me. I'm too old for a hag to draw wool over my eyes. . . . She's bad, I say."

Judy frowned, then her brow cleared and she hitched a little nearer the bed.

"No, she ain't," she contradicted. "She's helped me, she has! Can't I say over the things she's learned me?"

No answer came from the withered figure on the bed. Grandfather Ketchel had dropped to sleep. His puffed lids had fallen over his faded, old eyes, and regular breathing took the place of his panting, angry gusts.

"Liebchen,—kleines mädchen," he whispered. "Daddy'll catch you before you can get to the barn."

A smile trembled about Judy's lips. Grandpap's precious dreams of a daughter, long since lost to him, would carry him through the rest of that wild night! Then she bent over quickly and left a fluttering kiss on the old man's wrinkled brow and tiptoed noiselessly out of the room.

## CHAPTER XVII

### DON'T MAKE ME SAY IT ANY PLAINER

WHEN Judy came into the kitchen the next morning, Jim Shuckies was gone, and Grandfather Ketchel sat in his armchair smoking. Olive was still between the sheets, and Judy hoped she was asleep. Let the poor girl lie, thought Judy. It must have been daylight before Ollie had gone to bed.

"I reckoned you was never comin' down to get my tea, Judy-flack," complained Ketchel. "It's past seven o'clock. Honest folks ought to be up long before this."

There was none of the terror of the night before in his glance or in his words. Judy stopped short and looked at him searchingly. Long after crawling into bed in the small, morning hours, she had laid awake thinking of what she could say to calm his fears.

"'Tain't rainin' this mornin'," he observed after a while. "When it rains my legs pain something awful."

He spoke as if he were making this statement to himself, but Judy's sympathy, ever alive within her, answered him.

"The sun's shinin', granddaddy. You'll feel fine today."

Ketchel's pipe hand shot out toward the girl.

"Speak when you're spoken to, huzzy," he grated, "an' rattle that tea for me in a hurry."

She made no reply save to make short work of getting the breakfast. No criticism of grandpap delayed her a minute. He wanted his tea and his bit of toast, and it was her business to get them for him. The kettle was steaming and the bread browning on the top of the stove as Olive limped downstairs. Judy glanced at her. Never had she seen her cousin look so worn.

"I'll have some tea for you in a minute, Ollie," she said softly.

The lame girl didn't say anything but seated herself wearily.

Judy pulled out the old wooden table and set it. She waited in silence while the old man and Olive took their places. She overlooked grandpap's complaint that the toast was too brown, but noticed Olive did not touch her bread.

"Best eat a little, Ollie," she urged in low tones. "Then go back to bed a while. . . . You look tuckered out!"

It was while her teacup was at her lips that Judy saw her cousin glance quickly at Grandfather Ketchel, and then back at her, making an upward motion with her head.

Almost immediately Olive left the table and climbed the stairs, but Judy didn't dare to follow her too soon. So she put the dishes into a tin pan, wiped off the table and pushed it back against the wall.

By this time, grandpap was back at the window poking tobacco into his pipe.

"Seems to me you're fussin' a lot over nothin', Judy-flack," he growled. "A racket like you're makin' ain't pleasant when a feller's got a headache."

Judy went directly to him, love shining in her eyes.

"Can't I do something for your head, granddaddy?" she asked gently. "Mebbe a little——"

"Keep your mouth shut," snarled the old man. "That's your business in this here house. Nobody wants to hear your gab." Then a vacant expression settled on his angry face. "Where's Denny?" he wheezed.

Judy staggered back a few steps. Grandpap had no remembrance, then, of the events of the night before! The tired old brain had not been able to stand the strain. Had he gone crazy? No! Judy decided not. He sat quietly fumbling with his pipe, looking at her quite in his usual manner. She contemplated him for a short time. It was not for her to make him suffer it all over again. If he had forgotten, well and good! Perhaps he'd never think of Denny again. Judy suddenly, passionately, hoped he wouldn't.

"The baby's out," she murmured. "Denny's gone out!"

"Did he eat?" inquired Ketchel, sourly.

"I dunno!"

"If he didn't," he said between his teeth clenched down

on his pipe stem, "don't give 'im nothin' when he comes in. Folks late to meals in this house go hungry. That's my will, an' it's to be done, see?"

Judy left him, went to the stove, and quietly put a stick of wood into it.

Then she passed on to the stair door. She wanted to get up to Olive before her grandfather ordered her to stay downstairs. Ketchel's voice came to her as her foot touched the first step. She turned around and looked at him.

"Sliver tells me he won't wait much longer for your consent to marry him," he said. "You're wastin' good time, an' Jim won't stand for it, nor me, nuther. . . . Understand, Miss Judy-flack Ketchel?"

"Yep!" Judy acknowledged hopelessly. Then she stumbled up the stairs without waiting to hear any more.

When she reached the top of the flight, she saw Olive, face down on her bed. There was something so tragic about that silent, thin figure, that Judy crept forward and touched the other girl's shoulder.

"Set up, Ollie dear," she whispered. "An' don't talk very loud. Grandpap's forgot all about Denny. He don't seem to remember what happened at all. . . . An' don't tell 'im anything unless he speaks about it. . . . What'd you want me for?"

Olive wriggled to a sitting position.

"Judy, I just got to marry Jim," she breathed, "yet, I can't! Oh, God, I can't!"

Judy sat down on the edge of the bed.

"Don't cry so lond," she cautioned. "Grandpap'll hear you, an' if he yells at me, I'll have to go down. . . . What 'bout Sliver Jim?"

It seemed much longer to Judy than it really was, with her face close to Olive's, that they gazed into each other's eyes. To break the tension strung to the snapping point, she questioned,

"You wiggled your head for me to come up just now, didn't you?"

Olive drew a long, choking breath.

"Jim says, 'taint human nature for you not to tell on

him," she stated. "He's scared most out of his boots, but when I said last night——"

She sobbed afresh.

"When you said what, Ollie," Judy put in. "I can't do nuthin' for you 'til you tell me, can I?"

"I got to marry him, Jude, ain't that enough?" Judy heard. "Oh, don't make me say it any plainer!"

Judy's heart began to beat against her ribs like the taps on a drum.

"Sliver's a pup!" she gritted. "He's just what I said last night, not much of a man."

"An' I lame an' homely," Olive mourned, "an' you're pretty! Oh, you'll marry 'im, I bet. . . . Jim's that good lookin' no girl could stand against his lovin's long."

Touched at the girl's agony, Judy thrust her arm around her.

"Now listen to me, Ollie," she vowed. "Before ever I marry Sliver Jim you can put me right in the grave with daddy." Superstition almost kept her from finishing, but she continued bravely, "an' with Denny!"

If she'd had faith in Olive she wouldn't have added those last three words, but her cousin wasn't to be trusted. More than once Olive had given her solemn word not to tell grandpap some babyish prank of Denny's, but the old man always heard of it, and while Olive strenuously denied she told tales, Judy knew she had.

Seemingly unmindful of the remark about the boy, Olive hurried on,

"Jim says if he can get you to marry 'im, he'd be safe from your peachin' 'bout the kid. He says some time when you're in a temper you'll tell unless you marry 'im. . . . No woman ever tells bad things on her man." She made a tired gesture with her hand to her head. "Seems if I'd go batty just thinkin' about it, yet I'd ruther have anything happen than have him put away for years. I've told him, as how he ought to marry me——"

"So he had ought," interrupted Judy, fiercely. "An' mebbe he will . . . sometime! He's comin' to Rogues' Harbor today, I 'spose."

Olive shook her shoulders.



"Nope, he's goin' to Ithaca. . . . God, Judy! . . . A man like Jim'd drive a woman to her grave. He ain't satisfied lookin' after his farm, but must run off to get a slam in for the Fatherland. Not that I blame him a lot for that! Somebody's got to help Germany over here, an' Jim's got the bee bad. . . . But he'll get in trouble, Jim will."

"Citizens of the World," went through Judy's mind, leaving her shaking and helpless. There was no telling what Sliver Jim would do. She couldn't follow him all around the lake country nor keep him under her eye all the time.

"Why'll he get in trouble?" she queried. "Ollie, if you don't stop cryin' like that grandpap'll hear you. . . . Why'll Jim get in trouble?"

Olive shook her head.

"I dasent tell, Judy."

"Then I guess you want me an' Sliver to get married," suggested Judy, slyly.

"That I don't," moaned Olive, "but what can I do? . . . Anything? . . . No! . . . I can't! . . . Nothin'! . . . Just nothin'!"

Judy sat for some time thinking rapidly. Perhaps she could help. She put her finger under her cousin's chin, and looked long and earnestly into her eyes.

"Ollie, do you honest to God want to marry Sliver?"

"Ja—Gott in Himmel, yes, I do!" the girl shot back. Then she threw herself down on the pillow again, "but he don't want me in his house. He's told me that a hunderd times."

Judy brought up her knees and rounded them with her arms, locking her fingers together.

"If you married him, you'd have a pappy for your kid,—eh?" she surmised.

"Yep! But there ain't no hopes!"

"Sure there is! But it's like this, Ollie. If I help you get Jim, then you got to help me, see?"

"I dunno what I can do," Olive said miserably.

"You'll never tell Jim we talked about it?" asked Judy.

"Nein, never!"



"Grandpap says as long as you keep a thing down your throat it can't come off the tip of your tongue," Judy affirmed. "I'll swear on Denny to get Jim for you. . . . Now, you swear on him you'll help me."

"I swear!" sobbed Olive.

"It'll be a big job though," took up Judy, "now won't it, Ollie?"

"You said it, Jude," muttered the lame girl.

Again they fell into silence, Olive waiting to hear her cousin's request, and Judy considering how to put it. She finally decided to risk all on one chance.

"What's a—a—Citizen of the World, Ollie?"

Olive clapped her hands to her mouth, her startled eyes staring at Judy in wild apprehension. Then slowly her hands fell down almost nerveless.

"You'll get killed if you so much as say them words to anybody," she faltered.

"Tell me what it means all the same," insisted Judy. "You swore on Denny! Now, didn't you?"

Olive wrung her hands.

"Jude, as God lets me live," she gasped, "I didn't know what you was goin' to ask me!"

A relentless expression settled about Judy Ketchel's mouth.

"You want a daddy for your baby some day, eh?" she queried, "an' Jim's the feller! . . . Now, ain't he?"

"Ja, he sure is!" came in one breath from Olive.

"An' you keep sayin', 'Oh, Judy, don't get married to Jim!' An' I keep sayin' 'I won't.' Then, you come along an' tell me, Sliver's goin' to make me link up to him. I say this, Ollie," Judy unlocked her fingers and took one of her cousin's hands. "I say this," she repeated, "tell me what I want to know an' I'll get you Jim. . . . Now, there! Start right out an' spiel the hull thing. If it'll help you any to begin I tell you this! Jim's a Citizen of the World, an' so's grandpap, an' you, too! . . . What're they goin' to do?"

"I took a oath not to tell," Olive got out between her teeth.

"Then 'twas a bad one," Judy thrust back, "but that

one you took on little Denny was good. . . . A girl needn't keep a wicked oath, an' you got a baby comin'. . . . You got to think of him!"

Olive was as silent as if she had died. She lay so quiet Judy was at a loss how to draw forth what she must know, what her cousin must tell her! She got up slowly and yawned.

"Mebbe I'll have to marry Jim after all," she said in muffled tones.

"Sit down again," said Olive in a hard voice.

Judy fell back on the bed.

"Well?" was all she said.

"The Citizens," began Olive in a terrified whisper, "are goin' to help lick everybody what's against the Fatherland."

"Kill folks?" demanded Judy.

"Ja, an' blow up factories an' muss up the States as much as they can," stated Olive.

"Sliver's goin' to help, I 'spose?" Judy tried to keep her voice from trembling.

"He sure is," said Olive.

"When they goin' to start? . . . Soon? . . . In Ithaca?"

Olive nodded.

"What folks 're gettin' croaked first?" questioned Judy, her nerves a tingle.

Olive bent over toward Judy, and Judy bent over toward Olive.

"Old man, Kingsland's first," whispered Olive. "He's a rich man an lives in Ithaca. Jim's goin' to put him in his grave first."

"Oh," sighed Judy. "When? . . . Today?"

"Nein! Jim says not for a while yet," answered Olive. "The Citizens hate Kingsland, an' I don't blame 'em much after hearin' Jim tell what he's doin'. Why, he's dolin' out money by wads an' wads to France."

"When's he goin' to get croaked?" coaxed Judy.

"Oh, sometime this month, in two or three weeks, mebbe. Jim don't know the day yet! Judy, I'm as good as dead if you ever tell on me."

"I won't," promised Judy, thoughtfully.

"Jim's a fool," went on Olive. "He can't buck money, an' so I've told him many a time. But no! Nothin'll do but he's got to get married to you an mix up in war stuff."

"If 'twasn't for you, Ollie," returned Judy, "I'd say I hope Sliver'd get every inch of his skin pulled off him. But a man without a skin wouldn't be much good as a pappy for a nice little brat."

Grandpap's harsh voice, shouting from the kitchen, startled both girls.

"He's callin' me, Ollie," said Judy. "One more thing an' I'll go down. If Jim tells you anything about—Kingsland . . . an' the Citizens you'll let me know. . . . Sure, you'll tell me?"

"Ja," muttered Olive, "I'd do anything to get Jim."

Judy went away quickly as grandpap called again. On her way downstairs her tired, young face softened, the purple came back into her blue eyes, and she smiled to herself, a smile that, in spite of its haggardness, brought out of the land of dimples an expression that made Judy Ketchel seem far away from the tragedy of the past day.

When she walked into the kitchen her face was quite flushed, for she held in memory a tall boy with red hair, a boy who had smiled at her, and just as grandpap croaked again, in imagination Judy smiled back at Teddy Kingsland.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### PETER THE WONDERFUL

A BIG steamer slipped along through the Narrows on its way up New York Harbor. It had escaped the "U" boats and the ordinary perils of the sea, and had almost completed one more crossing.

Most of the passengers were still sleeping, but one man, alone on the forward deck moodily contemplated the sky and the tumbled, dark waters. Peter Kingsland bulked large in the covered gleam of the light that fell upon him. One thing about him betrayed a sense of anxiety or uncertainty. He smoked constantly!

In the midst of his reverie, a woman glided across the deck and placed her hand on his arm.

"Peter," she whispered.

The man turned and smiled a welcome.

"Satie! Why aren't you in bed?"

Sarah Kingsland drew a long sigh.

"I was until just now, but I can't sleep. I've turned and twisted until my bed is full of lumps. I knew you were up, of course. . . . You're worried, dear?"

Although no one was near them, they spoke in low tones, in English some of the time but mostly in German.

"Not worried, possibly a little anxious," rejoined Peter. "I was just planning. . . . There's such a lot to think about."

The early morning air was chilly and damp. Perhaps, that was why Sarah shivered, as she snuggled closer to her tall brother.

"Oh! If the United States hadn't declared war!" she undertoned. "It's changed all our plans and made them so dangerous! I get quite panicky when I think of it. Peter, do you think *it* can be done?"

"Certainly! Most certainly I do, Sarah! Didn't I promise the Kaiser, himself? There can't be failure in a

sure proposition. Have you ever known me to fall down on anything I've really started out to do, Sarah?"

Sarah noted the proud uplift of her brother's big shoulders. She remembered it was his personality that had first drawn the German Emperor's attention to them, and a quick thrill of pride swept over her. She was glad of Peter's six feet two body, his great head, set so haughtily on a powerful neck, glad of that unmanageable shock of red curls, and of his brilliant, winning smile, and his gleaming, red-brown eyes. She recalled, too, that last glittering assemblage at Berlin when they were receiving their farewell instructions before departing for home. Wilhelm, himself, had held her hand a moment as he talked to Peter.

"We expect you to do great things in America, Herr Kingsland," the Kaiser had said, "and we'll reward you when the time comes."

Surely, thought Sarah, the gratitude of Prussia was a prize worth trying for, and, surely, her wonderful brother would perform the task he'd undertaken. She didn't know how it was to be accomplished. She wasn't interested in details. Peter and his allies in the States would attend to them. She shook her head, the confidence she had felt in Berlin returning in great waves of delight.

"You couldn't fail in anything, darling," she exulted, "and won't our friends be happy!"

A queer smile twisted the corners of the man's lips. Happy! What a little word to use in expressing the emotions of the House of Hohenzollern if the great Western Republic could be brought low along with the British Empire and France!

He took out another cigarette, lighted it and handed it to his sister and proceeded to do the same for himself.

"You'll soon see how I'll manage this," he asseverated. "Come on, Sis, we might as well sit down."

When they were ensconced in a nook where the wind could not buffet them, Sarah Kingsland voiced a suspicion, her feminine intuition brought into existence.

"Petey, dear," she ventured, "I'd be careful how I trusted Klubert Stein, if I were you. He seems perfectly

anxious for Germany's success, but there's something queer about him. . . . He's American born, you know!"

Peter laughed, but Sarah, so used to his every mood and action, knew impatience was expressed in that low rumble.

"You're still croaking, du kleine," he replied. "Oh, Stein's all right. Von Bernsdorf vouches for him. American born? Well, so are you and I, dear! That doesn't mean anything. It's blood that counts! Stein's got it, so have we! It's loyal to the Fatherland every time. . . . You can bank on that."

Although not convinced, Sarah harked back to the one big grievance.

"I can't understand how the Yankees thought that they could afford to declare war against Germany," she complained. "Now, Countess Robson says,——"

Peter interrupted his sister with a sweeping, arrogant gesture. He had no desire to hear any of Florence Robson's gossip. He sympathized, however, with Sarah's incredulous amazement, for never would he be able to figure out the conduct of the United States.

When the school teacher at Washington had dismissed the German ambassador, Peter's Prussian friends had nodded their heads sagely and laid it to the door of politics, but nobody anticipated that war would be declared by the Congress of the United States. During the silence, Kingsland had imposed upon his sister, he had brought to his memory the scenes of rejoicing throughout the Central Empires at the news of the damage done by the "U" boats. Of course he wasn't worried even now, but the declaration of war made his mission in his own country more hazardous.

"The Americans 're fools!" he grumbled. "What business 've they in the war? They can't win! They'll be sorry when it's too late that they chose England's friendship instead of Germany's."

He crossed his legs and leaned back as though he'd settled the question of the warring nations satisfactorily.

Sarah felt sorry for the land of her birth. It was wholly unprepared for the waters of bitterness that would pour



over it from the iron hand of Prussia. Hadn't her friends in Berlin explained it all to her. How many times she had heard that the war was but a wicked attack on the Fatherland. Shudders ran over her as she thought of the injustice of it. How could any one expect to overcome glorious Germany's mighty pride or obstruct her march to world dominion! The United States would be ground to pieces. It was inevitable, and their part, difficult and dangerous though it might be, would count tremendously in the final result. She glanced at her brother, his regular profile silhouetted against the darkness beyond—the darkness where New York lay. How very splendid he was, this wonderful Peter! Oh, Yes! She had confidence in Peter, but was the United States as powerless as he thought?

"But, Peter, dear," she objected, "of course, the Americans 're common, but haven't they a lot of power when it comes right down to the bottom of things? You know how much they talk——"

"War takes men and materials," grunted Peter. He brought his teeth together sharply, making a perceptible click. "It's our business to keep them from doing anything effective, that's all. That won't be difficult, either. A democratic country is no good in a war,—too much afraid of interfering with somebody's right. We can agitate, publish newspapers, do anything we want to hinder them, and they won't peep. They'll blow a lot about what they're going to do, but they won't have any real effect on the result in France." He concluded his speech in a hissing whisper, and the woman shuddered.

"It's father I'm afraid of," she murmured. "I'm a coward, and I might as well admit it."

She stopped short, caught her breath, and a dry sob shook her. Peter turned his keen, red-brown eyes upon her. They glistened in the light that hung beacon-like above them.

"You're getting nervous, old dear," he soothed. "The Americans 're money mad, but what they don't know about war and self-sacrifice and the way to make their strength count, if they have any, would fill all the books ever written. As I have told you before, and we heard it discussed before

"we left, if they really had intended to do anything, they'd have bundled every mother's son of Germany out of the country long ago."

"I try to think so, dear, but—but——"

"There's no 'but' about it," interrupted the man, impatiently. "You're thinking of the execution of spies in Europe, now aren't you? Get that out of your mind! . . . They don't do such things over here. Remember, there's only one power fit to rule, and that's Germany. Those wonderful Prussians 're an object lesson to the world. Have you ever seen one of them flinch from carrying out one of his Majesty's orders?"

Because she had seen many a German flinch, Sarah didn't answer this.

"Won't it take a lot of money, Peter?" she asked presently.

Peter shrugged his shoulders.

"Not more than the pater can command, I imagine," he said, "and I'll use every dollar the old man can get hold of if necessary."

He concluded his remarks with a heavy laugh, but Sarah did not join in with any show of mirth.

"Perhaps the school teacher at Washington will prove he's not such a fool as we think him," she remarked at length. "At least he's fearless."

"Bosh," exclaimed Peter. "He can write letters and make speeches. That's been his business for years, but it'll take something besides conversation to stop Prussia, God bless her! . . . Say, Sarah, what's got into you? If pulling into New York sets you quaking like this, what'll Broadway do to you?"

The woman caught hold of one of the heavy arms beside her.

"It isn't Broadway, I'm worried about," she contradicted, "it's Ithaca! There's father and Theodore—Teddy, you know——"

"Theodore will do exactly what I tell him," thrust in Peter, haughtily.

"I'm not so sure of that," muttered Sarah. "You remember you tried to keep him with us years ago. Teddy's

got a mind of his own. Why, you offered him everything, but he insisted on coming back to Ithaca, and father backed him up in it too."

Peter straightened in his deck-chair. His sister's words stirred up painful memories. It didn't take much of an effort to go back and visualize his handsome, young son, that morning, when Teddy had decided to return to the United States. Peter brought to mind also, all the bribes he'd offered Theodore to inveigle him to change his plans. Then, when Peter arbitrarily refused his consent, Teddy had induced his grandfather to intervene. The old man's grip on the purse-strings made his request for his grandson's return a command, and Peter had been forced to allow the lad to go.

He hadn't seen Teddy since. Proud of him, yes, of course! He loved the boy better than any other human being, and it had galled him bitterly that his son had refused to act according to his wishes. For a moment, after he had banished the chagrin which his sister's words had roused anew, he played with the thought of how he would lay upon the altar of Germany's conquests this boy of his, so like himself in temperament and personality.

He frowned as he remembered one of Teddy's letters, berating the Germans.

"When you know the truth about Belgium, pater," Teddy had written, "you'll change your mind about the Kaiser. Come on home, daddy, everybody's working for the Belgians and the French."

The letter had contained many other things that had enraged Peter. He had written diplomatically in reply, avoiding reference to most of the charges, but he had said,

"Remember the old saying, son dear, 'Don't believe anything you hear nor half you see!' Germany's a wonderful country!"

It occurred to him he had said the same thing to Teddy in Berlin, and he remembered his boy's red head had given an emphatic shake.

"Not so wonderful as the United States," he had answered.

"But, pshaw!" ruminated Peter. "Why waste time over the past?"

"And there's father!" Sarah broken in. "However you're going to manage him, I don't know."

"I'll wait till I discover how he feels first," answered Peter. "Naturally, the pater'd take side with the Allies. I suppose he's fairly boiling with patriotic enthusiasm." The speaker smiled sarcastically. "But I have an idea I can make him reasonable. I've got to have money and a lot of it to carry out my promises to my friends. I'll manage him some way, you'll see!"

Silence settled over them while the glory of the dawning of a new day began to unroll itself before their eyes.

"We're almost home," sighed Sarah.

Peter rose and took his sister's arm.

"Stand up, dear," he said, helping her to her feet.

While she was standing by his side, alone in the bow of the boat, Peter took off his cap.

"May God bring quickly to an end this wicked assault upon a glorious country," he breathed in her ear. "May Germany bring every man and woman in the world to a common belief in Prussia. God bless our King and Emperor, Wilhelm, and our staunch German friends!"

Sarah clutched at him in absolute terror, but Peter with head now flung high, continued,

"May swift punishment fall upon the misguided leaders of the United States, and may I, as a Citizen of the World, be the instrument of divine retribution!"

"Amen," sobbed Sarah, and Peter, Peter the Wonderful, bent his head reverently as he, too, repeated softly, "Amen!"

## CHAPTER XIX

### "TALK GOD"

THAT afternoon, four people were congregated in a magnificent suite of an uptown hotel. There were two men and two women. One of the women was Sarah Kingsland, her face rather drawn and pale. The impression she'd received during the trip from the dock to the hotel had revived her fears. When she heard the roar of the streets, and sensed the vast resources of power and purpose back of the great city, her heart faltered before the task Peter and herself with their friends were undertaking.

The other woman, Countess Robson, was standing beside a baby-grand piano, a cigarette held lightly in her fingers.

"It's almost like old times, only we're not in Berlin," she said.

"I wish we were back there," sighed Sarah. "I hate New York."

Peter Kingsland was talking to the other man when his ear caught Sarah's remark. He noted also the dejected strain in her voice. In the past few years, his sister had meant a great deal to him, and just now at the opening of his new career, he didn't want her downcast. He turned swiftly and threw a brilliant smile on the two women.

His sister went to him and slipped her hand into his.

"I'm sorry," she apologized, "to throw a wet blanket on the party, but New York's so big, and, and the people look so strong! Why, they actually smile and laugh, Herr Stein! . . . They don't seem to be in the least afraid of—of Germany!"

Stein's lips curled under his long mustache. The lids of his eyes drooped a little.

"Mademoiselle will see what'll happen soon," said he, bowing.

"We'll show these Yankees a thing or two," asserted Peter. "Sis, you don't understand how strong the Society of the Citizens of the World is." He turned to Stein. "Women have the idea to be safe they've got to be wrapped in some country's flag and have passports and things."

"I don't," laughed Countess Robson. "Of course, if I had to choose a dress of birds, I'd select the black eagle. A little personal preference, Kulbert, eh?"

Peter had left his sister's side and gone to Florence Robson.

"What a brick you are!" he commended in low tones. "I wish you'd say something to Satie to buck her up."

He looked deep into the dark eyes and smiled. Peter was a flirt by nature, so a smile or two meant nothing.

"I guess I'm tired," Sarah offered in excuse. "Everything is so much different from what I expected. Why, I thought the Americans would be frightened to death——"

"So they are," interrupted Stein.

Sarah made an emphatic gesture with her head.

"No, they're not," she denied. "They're not as down-cast right at this moment as the Berlin people were when they heard England had declared war. For my part, I believe we've been fooled. The men here look as if they had muscles of iron."

Her brother's face had grown dark as thunder.

"Don't be an idiot, Satie," he rasped. "What'd you expect? People don't go around crying and wringing their hands on the streets."

"They did in Germany," contended Sarah, her eyes kindling. "They acted like maniacs over there, and you all know they did!"

"But we've got something that'll alter the complexion of things over here," drawled Countess Robson. "When our Society gets to work——"

"Yes, our Society," broke in Stein. "With the heaps of money which Herr Kingsland has promised to provide, we can clog the wheels of the United States without much difficulty."

Sarah glanced furtively at her brother. Certainly to look at him ought to bring back her courage. Yet in the



past few hours, she had frantically wished Peter hadn't been so eager about the Citizens of the World, and that neither one of them had taken that dreadful oath. Of course, she never would have entered into the scheme at all if she hadn't been persuaded Germany would be successful.

Again the thought of New York alive with bustling enthusiasm came to her like an evil omen.

"I read all the papers this morning at breakfast," she said, "and, mind you, while I'm one of the Citizens of the World, I think it's foolhardy to enter into such a campaign as you've mapped out. Why, those men at Washington aren't cowards; they're fighters, and they'll have us all arrested."

"Woman alive," groaned Peter, "how long are you going to keep this thing up?"

"Satie's giving us a lecture on American bravery," sneered the Countess. "Pray let her go on."

Sarah was so angry at this that her small, white teeth came together sharply.

"Yes, I will go on," she snapped. "It's suicidal to get into public notice just now. If these people——" She made one broad sweep of her arm as if to take in the United States at large. "I say, if these people had been shivering—afraid—and cowardly as we were given to believe when we started out, then you might have imbued most of them with ideas of—of——" She paused, taking in her three auditors in one, swift glance. "—of God and brotherly love, and the purpose of Heaven to keep the United States out of war. . . . But what do we find? A country on its knees praying for peace at any price?—No! Not that, but a mighty mass of men—Yes, and—and women, too, rejoicing over the fact they've got millions of men and billions of money to defeat us."

Peter was studying his sister's face as though she had lost her mind. Ever before she had followed his lead without any resistance.

"Sarah!" he lifted his voice threateningly.

"Well, I've got to speak," she continued. "Mein Gott, I don't want to go to jail, nor see you go either, Peter. I'm warning you right now that that man at Washington

is something besides a school teacher. Why read the bulletins, the papers, the signs everywhere against just such things as we're trying to do. They make me shiver all over. . . . I for one want to back out."

"You can't," exclaimed Countess Robson. "You simply can't, my dear."

"Perhaps I can't now," returned the other, hopelessly, "but I do say this, these Americans aren't fools or cowards, and as for pulling the wool over their eyes, you might as well try to catch a weasel asleep."

"Women's twaddle," murmured Stein, shrugging his shoulders.

He turned and spoke to Peter, and Sarah sank back and wept into her handkerchief. Stein's voice, smooth, carefully modulated, rankled her nerves like nettles. Yet surely she did believe in the brotherhood of man, that all people, wherever they lived, should be Citizens of one country. And what country so capable to guide the rest of the world as delightful Germany! What man so fitted to handle the destinies of the people as the Kaiser, Wilhelm, with his stately bearing, his culture, his personal magnetism! In spite of her terror, she thrilled when she remembered the grip of his hand and his reassuring words. Hadn't he prayed aloud for victory of his invincible army! . . . But this man, Stein! She looked again and shuddered. She couldn't get up any enthusiasm over him.

"I suppose you'll go to—what did you say the name of your birthplace was called?" Stein asked of Peter. "Ah, yes, Ithaca! . . . That's a grand, old name, and may the rebirth of this country come from that spot!"

"So may it," responded Peter, smiling. "It will, too, if we carry out our plans, Herr Stein! . . . Now, give me the names of the Citizens up there."

Stein took from his pocket a small book. After searching a while through its pages, he said,

"There's a German living near Ithaca, by the name of Ketchel, Herman Ketchel."

"Herman Ketchel," repeated Peter, writing it down on a tablet. "Any more?"

"Yes, my man Meggs is there, and a clipper he is, too,"

chuckled Stein. "It won't be hard to find him. Here's his address." He scribbled a few words on a card and handed it over. "See him. He'll put you in touch with the Citizens there. Look 'em up, Peter, and don't forget we need money down here."

"The Kingsland's have lots of that, Klubert. I'll send you some as soon as I get home."

When they were about to separate, Stein said with a warning, upheld finger,

"Be very careful. Don't get into wrangles about the war, and don't make unpatriotic speeches. Talk God and peace. Denounce England, and—and in the other matters work secretly. Establish the Society firmly. Get everybody interested you possibly can, but be very sure of them before you let them know your plans. I believe we understand each other, Herr Kingsland! Now, then, a toast, before we separate."

He went to the table, took up the bottle which evidently was there for the purpose, and the other three were silent as he filled and passed around the glasses.

Sarah's face was white, and she trembled perceptibly.

"I vote we drink a toast to keep out of prison," she shivered.

"No, not that!" interposed Stein. "Here! . . . Here's to the world's leader, Wilhelm of Germany, und der Tag! May God bless and guide every missile sent out from his powerful guns!"

"Amen," came from Peter and Countess Robson emphatically, but Sarah only touched her lips to her glass and set it down without saying anything.

Peter glared at her and fumed inwardly as he noticed the Countess' smile and the sarcasm in Stein's eyes. To overcome Sarah's influence on the other two if she'd exerted any, he cried,

"Deutschland über alles!"

## CHAPTER XX

### SOMETHING WORSE'R N DEATH

ABOUT three weeks after Denny's disappearance from the Ketchel farmhouse, one of the usual pantomimes had taken place at the breakfast table between Olive and Judy. It consisted of Judy's wagging her head toward the forest while grandpap was filling his pipe, and Olive returning a furtive nod. The lame girl left the house and made her way slowly through the fodder field to the patch of woods where Judy's birdies lived. A little later, Judy followed, leaving Grandfather Ketchel hugely enjoying his pipe.

When the girls were squatted upon the soft earth, facing each other, almost nose to nose, the familiar, forest sounds punctuated the quietude of the morning. The trees were full of twittering birds, and in the fields beyond, a company of crows were discussing matters of grave import.

Judy loved all these sounds of living nature. She found strange, sweet music in the expression of all animate things; the whistle of the cat bird, the caw of the crow, and the bawling of a calf in the farmyard along the lake.

Now, Judy reasoned in this way. Didn't a calf have as much right to yell for his ma in the only language he knew as she, Judy Ketchel, had to spiel her English? Wasn't a papa crow, dear, black fellow that he was, entitled to make love to his wife in the tongue God had given him? Yes, and the bee could buzz in the sunshine—the birds sing their twilight song—the owls hoot back and forth in the gloaming, and Judy firmly believed each of his kind understood the other, whether under the glory of a burning sun or when that rolling ball of fire had passed down behind the western hill to give life and warmth to men of other tongues and colors.

For a long while the two girls remained silent. Deep misery marked Olive's countenance, and her thin body was

shrunk together. Judy's face was flung up to the tree tops. It seemed to her as if the whole background of the world was illuminated by a boy's smile, by the sheen of red curls, and of passion-laden, red-brown eyes.

Olive touched her cousin on the arm.

"What'd you want with me, Judy?"

"I was goin' to ask you something, Ollie, but—but the sun shines so clear an' the birdies talk so sweet, I most forgot about it. . . . Say, what's Sliver doin'?"

Olive's surly mouth pursed up as if she was going to whistle.

"He's mollygrubbin', for one thing," she answered.

"Oh, he's that mad at you, he could kill you!"

Judy forgot about the crows, the humming bees and the birds' song, even forgot that there were a pair of red-brown eyes that always smiled at her in her dreams.

"Let 'im stay mad, an' rub the mad place if it hurts 'im, I don't care," she snapped. "Is he goin' to try to kill me, Ollie?"

"Ja," said the lame girl in a hollow voice. "He'll try all right if you don't get married to him."

Indescribably swift, a troubled expression swept the purple from Judy's blue eyes and effaced the dancing dimples from her cheeks.

"Did he say he was goin' to kill me, Ollie?"

"Ja, an' he'll do it too, or—or worse! Sliver says you're dangerous, an' if he can't get hold on you, you might peach on us! About Denny, see!"

Judy considered the other's face, white now from the horror of the thing she'd confessed.

Worse? Something worse than death! Shuckies' ugly purpose flashed through Judy's mind. There was only one thing worse than lying beside the Ketchels in Rogues' Harbor graveyard and that was being Jim's woman.

"Sliver's a fool," she remarked after a while. "If I was goin' to tell it ever, wouldn't I a told long before now? An' peachin' on my blood won't bring Denny back. I wouldn't hurt grandpap for anything in this here county, yes, more'n that, not for anything in every county, an' you know it, Ollie!"



"I told Jim that," sighed Olive. "But I've took one guess an' don't need no more. He's still wantin' you for his wife, Judy! He ain't worryin' so much 'bout your tellin'. Why, I said only yesterday to him, 'Jim, when Jude says she won't, she won't! An' she ain't, now has she?' "

"What'd he say to that?"

"Oh, Gawd, Jim's sure you're honest all right, but he says, Jim does, 'Judy Ketchel knows too much!'"

"Sure, too much," retorted Judy, "a dum sight too much for sleepin' good! . . . But, Ollie, you might drop a little mouthful of something at Jim for me when you see him."

She paused and thought a moment for she had to frame a warning that would impress Shuckies, and at the same time not get Olive into a mess. She had to protect herself! Too many people needed her just then. First, she thought of Denny, but Denny was in the Garden of Glory, safe with Honor Lessington. Grandpap Ketchel and his many aged needs followed closely after the little boy through the girl's active brain. No one liked grandfather as well as she did. If she weren't in the farmhouse, the old man would often suffer from neglect. After these two came Senator Kingsland, her friend. She had to guard him from the Citizens of the World. Then for an instant, every one of these faded from before her as a picture fades out on the screen, and Teddy Kingsland with his proud red-head and his dazzling smile completely enthralled her being. She'd seen him several times since Denny's journey to the House of Mystery, and each time he had smiled at her and doffed his cap.

Olive put her hand on her arm.

"Judy, your eyes 're purple, well, as purple's can be," she announced as though she noticed her cousin's eyes for the first time.

Judy laughed, a confused laugh, for Teddy seemed very close out there on the rocks.

"An' them dimples 're flyin' in and out of your face like as if they were tryin' to get swallowed an' couldn't," added Olive.



"Mebbe, I will swallow 'em some day," smiled the other, "but——"

"You were tellin' me what to say to Jim," interrupted Olive.

All of a sudden Judy Ketchel became serious.

"Sure I was," she assented, "an' it's this. Tell 'im some one likes me awful well, better'n he does, an' if I don't show up 'bout Rogues' Harbor an' McKinney's Point, every day, there'll be hell to pay. He couldn't plant me in the ground like he—he did Denny without gettin' into more trouble than the kid 'll ever give 'im."

Olive looked at her cousin aghast.

"If I told 'im that," she cried, "he'd be so blusterin' mad he'd kick all the way up to his house an' back."

"Let 'im kick," responded Judy, unconcerned. "His feet 're his own, an' what kickin' he does with 'em won't bother me any. But you'd better tell 'im just the same."

"Is the person what likes you a man?" asked Olive.

Oh, how she hoped Judy would say, "Yes." It would ease up a little her feeling of insecurity and jealousy.

Judy held up her hand.

"I got four folks keepin' a clear eye on me," she rejoined. "Jim couldn't even pull out one of my curls without getting into deep water. . . . Tell 'im that too."

In her eagerness, Olive's nose almost touched Judy's.

"I guess, mebbe, I better say a woman likes you, Jude," she quivered.

"Sure, tell 'im anything. Tell 'im a woman loves me; tell 'im I go to see her every day. Just anything you like, to keep his dirty hand off'n me!"

"I wish Jim'd settle down an' get married to me," sighed Olive.

"He will," comforted Judy, "but things like that take time. You can't tie a man foot an' hand these days an' marry 'im whether or no. You'll get Jim, Ollie, as sure as my name's Judy Ketchel, an' don't be worryin'. You're gettin' thinner every day."

"I guess I'm goin' to die," mourned Olive.

"Shucks, you aint nuther," contradicted Judy, vigor-

ously. "Why, Olive, you couldn't kill a Ketchel with a hammer."

The terror at the thought of death brought beads of perspiration on Olive's brow.

"Rogues' Harbor graveyard's full of 'em," she sobbed. "There's your daddy, an' my daddy, an' Denny——"

Judy instantly saw she'd overshot the mark. She couldn't leave her cousin so downcast, so miserable.

"But 'twasn't hammers what killed 'em," she burst forth. "Now, shut up 'bout dyin', Ollie. Why, honey, you got a little baby to think of. You can't be goin' 'round actin' like a corpse an' do 'im any good. 'Tain't possible!"

"It's Jim's baby," whispered Olive, a heavenly light shining in her eyes.

"Sure, Jim's baby, an' your baby," assented Judy. "An' Ollie, there ain't nothin' in the world so nice as a baby. When you get 'im you can sing to 'im, an' dearie, listen to me."

"I'm all ears, like a donkey, Judy," Olive cut in. "Spit it out."

"When you get 'im, your baby, I mean," went on Judy, impressively, "Jim'll kiss 'im, now, won't that be nice?"

Again, that strange light, beautiful even in tired eyes, shot across Olive's face. She controlled her agitation, swallowed hard, and coughed desperately. She took a long breath, then let it come out sighingly between her teeth.

"I'd ruther see that, than see, than see—God!" she vowed.

Judy's tender heart grew suddenly larger in vital, living strength. Poor, little, despised Olive! All she needed to make her happy was to see Jim Shuckies' thick lips kissing a baby's face. Judy vowed inwardly Olive should set her eyes on that sight if it took all the strength and wheedling she was capable of.

"Come an' give a feller a kiss, Ollie!" Judy pursed up her red lips and held out her hands.

Astonished and embarrassed, Olive drew back. She could never remember kissing Judy Ketchel, yet, yet she

wanted to! She began to cry, and Judy took her by the shoulders.

"Come along," she urged. "Put your head right here." One brown hand touched the girlish bosom. "Now, give me a kiss!"

Olive's arms went up around Judy's neck, and the two girls kissed each other solemnly.

"You're a good, old scout, Ollie," grinned Judy, "an' that kiss were a awful nice one. Ketchels don't kiss much, but when they do, oh, Lordy! Say, Ollie, grandpap an' Jim acted awful funny last night. What's Jim goin' to do?"

A startled expression came into Olive's eyes, she shook her head.

"I dunno," she mumbled.

Judy's theory was when she had to strike, to hit hard and quick.

"Yes, you do, Ollie, so don't lie about it. You want Jim, now, don't you? . . . You want to get married an' keep his house, don't you?"

Olive bent her head.

"Well, both of us know Jim's a jackass from Jackass town. You know what he done to Denny. He's apt to do worse, an' others get 'im, swipe like that." Judy made a hoop of her arms and a movement with them as if gathering something in. "How can I help you keep him out of hellish scrapes if you don't tell me things? . . . What's Jim doin' today?"

"He's goin' to Ithaca this afternoon," offered Olive, shaken and half convinced.

"What for?"

"Honest this time, Judy, I can say I dunno, an' it'll be God's truth. Something's goin' on in town, an' Jim's mixed up in it. I know that much."

"Citizens of the World stuff, eh?" probed Judy.

"Ja," assented Olive.

Judy meditated a long time. She didn't know what to do.

"What's goin' on in Ithaca?" she questioned presently.

"Oh, war stuff," replied Olive. "Folks jubileeing over"

gettin' money to whack at the Fatherland. I tried for hours last night to get Jim to promise he'd stay home, but he wouldn't."

Judy bent over and gazed for several seconds into her cousin's eyes.

"You ain't tellin' me all you know, Ollie," she charged. "Now, out with the rest."

"I dunno much," returned Olive. "Only Jim's mad at Kingsland, old man Kingsland. I don't know as he'll do anything today, but he's goin' to Ithaca, because he said so!"

Judy rose to her feet.

"Well, I'm goin' down to see Miss Lessington, Ollie, an' you stay by grandpap, an' if I ain't back at noon give 'im his tea, will you?"

Olive threw out both her hands.

"Ja," she promised. "But why do you want to go to that woman's, Judy? That's one thing makes Sliver an' grandpap ragin' mad. You keep goin' to the haunted house. Granddaddy says he always knows when you been there because ghosts slip off'n your skirts the minute you set your foot inside the farmhouse."

Olive shuddered, and Judy grinned.

"If grandpap says it again, Ollie," she advised, "you say right back in his face, 'Well, grandpap, as long as them ghosts don't get in the house, what'd you care!' . . . Goodbye, Ollie. Scoot home now an' stay with grandpap."

## CHAPTER XXI

### LOVE ME A LITTLE

As soon as Olive rounded the corner of the barn, Judy scudded along the edge of the woods to the path leading to the railroad track. At the foot of the highway leading up the hill to the middle road, she saw a motor car descending the grade just north of McKinney's Point. Teddy Kingsland was at the wheel, and when he caught sight of Judy, he came to a sudden halt at the side of the road.

"Want to ride?" he smiled. "Hop in. I'll take you wherever you're going."

Judy shook her head. Her eyes devoured the speaker and his car although her tongue wouldn't move. How could she speak! To ride in a "devil wagon," as grandpap called automobiles, made her breathless. Her own notion, especially since she'd seen Teddy Kingsland driving one, was that they were like the chariots of fire she read about in her red Bible. Why, she'd no more think of sitting in that seat beside *him*, than of flying over the moon.

"Hop in, I say," said Teddy, once more.

"I can't," protested Judy. "I couldn't, not today. . . . Oh, you can see I couldn't!" She glanced over her calico dress and swept her hands in a deprecatory motion across its narrow skirt. For a moment, the gesture brought more prominently into view the high-arched, small, brown feet, the finely turned ankles and the beginnings of the slender calves above them. "You see, I'm barefooted."

It was the only excuse she could think of just then.

"No matter," Teddy laughed, his red-brown eyes shining, "you were born with bare feet. . . . So was I. . . . Who cares? . . . Come on!"

The girl laughed too, but persisted in her refusal.

Teddy opened the door of the car and climbed down into the road.

"Well, if you won't get in, then I'm going to get out," he announced. "I've got to talk to you." He wiped his face with his handkerchief. "Whew!" he went on, "it's a hot day for a parade."

Parade! A parade in Ithaca! Judy pricked up her ears. Was that why Jim was going down to the city? The puzzled expression on her face brought forth an explanation from the boy.

"Ithaca's going to doll up today for a great fun time," he informed her. "The Allies whipped the Germans back a bit, and every one's going to shout for joy! Help the Red Cross get lots of boodle, you see!"

He was standing beside her at the edge of the macadam now, his eager, young eyes taking in the girlish beauty with throbbing heart. Teddy knew lots of girls although none like this yellow-haired enigma from Rogues' Harbor. What did he care if she were barefooted, that she wore a faded, cotton dress? She had force, purpose, personality. "Pep," Teddy called it. Anyhow, he liked her, liked the way the smiles and dimples appeared and disappeared in her rosy face and was captivated by the shy, purple lights he had glimpsed in the depths of the bright, blue eyes.

"Going to the parade!" he queried.

Flushes mounted Judy's cheeks. She was so embarrassed at his proximity, she felt she must turn and run.

"No," she faltered. Then Sliver's statement about the Citizens of the World came to her. Well," she hesitated finally, "mebbe, after a while, I will. . . . I dunno."

Theodore cast his eyes longingly toward a thick, overhanging tree.

"Come," he invited in a thrilled voice. "It's shady right over there. . . . Come."

He strode forward and pushed aside the branches with his hands, glancing backward over his shoulder.

"Let's sit down here and talk a while. Oh, you're not in a hurry!"

Divided between two impulses, Judy hesitated. Some-



thing urged her to escape, but something else wouldn't let her.

"I'm a weenty bit in a hurry," she asserted, but she followed with trembling footsteps. In a breath's time, a thick screen of leaves and branches cut them off from the road completely. The only evidence of their nearness was the runabout there in the road. The boy threw himself down on the dry ground and by an imperative gesture indicated Judy was to sit beside him. She dropped down embarrassed, covering her feet with her short skirt. For a moment, Teddy remained quiet. He was going to be very personal. He had come purposely that morning to talk to her, and he didn't intend to let such an opportunity slip. He had quizzed his grandfather a number of times about the girl who had appeared at Kingsland Court that rainy night, but Senator Kingsland had given him little satisfaction. Now he'd find out for himself.

"I've got to know where she lives," he vowed inwardly. "Here goes!"

Then he became embarrassed. Perhaps, if he would adroitly tell her about himself, he might make her confide in him. He glanced at her. There was strange solemnity in the purple eyes,—a tremulous movement of the curved lips that made him forget everything but the yellow curls, the shy, young face and the waves of crimson that came suddenly, then went away again. Teddy forgot too his self-consciousness in the imperative necessity of knowing something really important, something more essential than clothes and family and things like that.

"Has a boy ever kissed you?" he burst out.

The tense earnestness of his voice deprived his question of every suggestion of impertinence. Besides Judy didn't know the young ladies of Teddy's acquaintance would have resented such an inquiry. She didn't! She turned upon him a steady gaze, nor did she lower her lids as the import of what he had said flooded her face crimson. Of course, there was Jim Shuckies who wanted to kiss her and had tried to too, but not until this minute, until Teddy's question suggested it, had she ever connected this red-haired idol of her dreams with—kisses.

"Goddy, no," she gasped. "What'd I be doin' lettin' boys kiss me?"

Although he'd never known bad fortune and had always been accustomed to having his every wish gratified, for the first time in his life Theodore Kingsland experienced perfect contentment.

"I'm glad," he sighed. "Oh, I'm just awfully glad to hear you say that."

Then Judy dropped her lids. She had seen his eyes were misty, like the stars near the moon at night when it augured rain for the next day.

"Look at me, please," Teddy stammered hoarsely. "Can't—can't I kiss you just once?"

Judy's head spun around like a top. Her whole body began to tremble. He had asked to kiss her, and oh, how she wanted him to, but kisses from Theodore Kingsland weren't for Judy Ketchel. Why, he was rich! He lived at Kingsland Court, the most beautiful spot in the world, while she belonged in Rogues' Harbor. Teddy's pointed pause showed plainly that he was only waiting her consent. Then he snatched her fingers.

"Please, let me! Please!" he begged.

Tingling from the touch of him, Judy drew back her hand. She swayed a little, but after a while she turned partly away.

"I wouldn't let you kiss me for a million dollars," she averred. "It'd be awful, most awfully awful."

Teddy didn't agree with her at all.

"Look at me," he commanded masculinelike.

Judy complied reluctantly, and the purple in her eyes showed to the red-brown, searching gaze the struggle going on within the girlish bosom.

"I think it would be awfully nice," asserted Teddy, going white with the thought. "Please! I must! . . . I love you so; can't you see that?"

Judy struggled to her feet, throbbing over and over with the impetuosity of his words. He loved her, her, Judy Ketchel, grandkid to old Herman Ketchel! What a wonder-world it was after all! Only this morning she had

reflected how much unhappiness there was in it, but there wasn't the least, little bit of sorrow anywhere!

She made an involuntary movement as if to go away, but Teddy stopped her by bounding up. He drew her to him fiercely, with a gesture so new to Judy Ketchel, that for a moment she grew limp. Her yellow head was pressed against his breast. An overwhelming, primeval passion took possession of her which threatened an engulfing of her soul in his. There came no thought of Olive, distressed and disgraced; no thought of grumbling grandpap demanding his tea. She only felt a delightful desire to stay right there in Teddy's arms forever and ever. She leaned against him panting, as he, with his lips on her curly head, murmured over and over ardent words that burned her ears like flames.

All at once as if God's thunder had spoken from up there above the tree-tops, words blotted out his sweet mumbling.

"Citizens of the World," was what Judy thought she heard.

Senator Kingsland threatened by Sliver Jim came across her mind. Chills ran down her back like tiny streams of cold water. She dragged herself away.

"I got to get along," she murmured dizzily. "No, no, don't touch me again. . . . I got to go."

Teddy held out his arms imploringly.

"You might! Oh, please be kind to me. I love you so!" he cried. "I didn't know love was anything like this. Why, every time I see you I want to hug you."

"An' you did," breathed Judy, dropping her eyes. "An' you kissed my hair too."

How sweetly shy she was! It seemed to Teddy as if every wafting breeze would pick her up and carry her off. True, he had kissed her hair, but that wasn't enough. He wanted to kiss her lips, those red, red lips that smiled at him and trembled at the same time.

Not daring to trust herself, Judy backed away from him little by little.

"Couldn't you love me a little, Judy?" asked Teddy, fiercely. "Don't you think you could?"

One lengthy stride had brought him so near her that Judy gasped for her breath. She thought she'd lost it forever. Then womanly instinct suddenly swept away her desire to throw herself into his arms; to remember only that he was asking her to love him a little.

"Can't you see 'tain't possible?" she flashed. "Can't you see huggin's wicked, an'—an' can't you see I'd love to have one weenty, little kiss from you?"

Teddy's hands shot out to seize her, but she had plunged through to the road and was running swiftly away. For what seemed a long time, he stood by his machine, dazedly watching her. Then, wiping his forehead, he sighed, climbed back into the motor car and started it for Ithaca.

## CHAPTER XXII

"LORD! WHAT 'A SCRAPE!"

QUIVERING like a leaf in the wind, Judy mounted the path toward the House of Mystery. Within that growing, girlish soul, at the portals of which the woman was knocking, she could feel an almost irresistible desire to return to her sweetheart. Theodore Kingsland was driving along slowly there in the road; if she called, he would hear. He had pleaded, "Love me a little!" Why! She adored him! But standing there panting, other thoughts darkened the glory of the moment, thoughts of Roderick Kingsland at the mercy of the fiercely solemn men who came now and then to grandpap's, . . . thoughts of Shuckies in Ithaca that very day where she herself must go.

When she entered the living room, a moment later, where Doctor Carmen sat with Honor Lessington, Judy was quite herself.

The expression of concern on their faces and particularly the tender gravity of their greetings warned her she was due to hear something unpleasant. Judy never met trouble half way. . . . Difficulties that couldn't be avoided had to be overcome, and she could fight for her dear ones with might and main, when necessary.

"I came to see Denny," she announced after acknowledging the other's words of welcome.

Without speaking Mrs. Lessington got up, and as she passed, Judy caught the imploring glance her friend sent to the tall, frowning doctor. Used to the quick sorting out of enemies, Judy realized it was Carmen who had brought gloom to Denny's haven of peace. She liked David Carmen, but if he wanted a fight, she was ready.—Didn't she love grandpap, and hadn't she had many a scrap with him?

Mutely, she followed the other two upstairs to Denny's room and smiled broadly at the thin, little boy sitting up in bed, his right arm still in splints.

The moment he caught sight of his sister, Denny gurgled in glee.

"Hi, Judy," he cried, "see what I got. A soldier, a real soldier, an' I got a engine! I call my soldier, Dave, 'cause Doctor Carmen brought him to me. It's a awful nice name. . . . Dave is!"

Judy Ketchel sat down on the edge of the bed, slipped her arm around the speaker and cuddled him to her side.

"He's getting well?" she questioned Carmen.

"Yes, in a few days he'll be able to go out."

She caught the ominous tone in the doctor's voice and puckered up her lips. She felt intuitively the cause of Honor's pale face, of David Carmen's stern, relentless air. Drops of perspiration grew beadlike in her palms. Then she reached out and took Denny's left hand protectingly.

"He can't never go out about here," she said huskily. "Some one'd see 'im."

"Yes! . . . That's true," replied Carmen, laconically,

During this time, Mrs. Lessington at the foot of the bed, kept perfect silence. She had promised the doctor he should arrange what was to be done about Denny.

"Let sister see all your pretties," exclaimed Judy.

In childish delight, Denny held up a toy soldier.

"I only got to pull this string, Judy," he explained, "an' the soldier walks. Now, see! Look at 'im go! Him and me's goin' to fight the Germans as soon as my arm's well."

The girl's eyes filled with tears, but she brushed them away with her sleeve. She looked up at David Carmen.

"It was awful good of you to get 'im those things," she whispered. "I ain't able to thank you just now."

The doctor's hand fell upon her shoulder. He hated the task before him, but right was right, and David didn't intend to allow his emotions to get the better of his judgment.

"Child," he said, much moved, "you don't need to thank me. You see, we—Mrs. Lessington and I, want to talk to you."



"Yep, I guess I know what you want," mumbled Judy. "Denny, sister's got to go downstairs. Be a good kid, an' ——"

Denny pushed his tin engine over the white coverlid.

"Look at 'er go, Judy!" he shouted. "It's a fine engine, Judy darlin', an' my soldier's been walkin' all over the Germans ever since last night."

"That's good," gulped Judy. "Kiss me, honey! I got to go now."

The little fellow offered his lips to be kissed, then Judy, turning, followed Doctor Carmen and Honor Lessington downstairs.

"Bang down the Germans, Dave," they heard Denny shriek. "Biff! Bang! There goes a Hun!"

In the living room again, the three sat in strained silence for quite a spell. Judy had long since discovered the advantage of making the other fellow open a contest. Impassively, at least she tried to appear so, she awaited the coming blow. Mrs. Lessington's sympathy was with the girl, although she had been forced to admit Doctor Carmen was in the right.

David found the situation more difficult than he had anticipated. The pathos in every line of Judy's lovely face cut him to the quick. He cleared his throat noisily.

"Now, we'll . . . talk, little Judy," he began.

Judy didn't feel that this remark demanded any comment from her.

"The fact is," he broke the silence again abruptly, "Denny must go home with you in the very near future."

Something like this, Judy had expected, but, because she didn't know how at this moment to change the doctor's mind, she sat very quietly and studied his face.

Back of the unswerving look she bent on him, her mind was fairly boiling. She thought of grandpap and Sliver Jim, of the boy upstairs, once more in their power. She had discovered that Doctor Carmen's word was law. But if it was an irresistible force, her necessities made Denny an immovable object. Judy didn't know anything about science, but she perceived the dilemma and put its solution up to the doctor.

“He can’t,” she said icily, after a while. “Denny’s dead an’ buried, Denny is!”

Her intimate knowledge of the situation at the Ketchel farmhouse, enabled Honor to catch a glimpse of the effect Denny’s resurrection would have there.

“Judy!” she ejaculated.

Because Carmen lacked a full understanding of Judy’s predicament, he didn’t appreciate the sharpness of the horns of the dilemma she’d presented, and in his turn attempted to impale her.

“It’s this way, Judy,” he began again. “Denny can’t be kept indoors all summer, and I’m sure you don’t want Mrs. Lessington to get into trouble, do you?”

Judy threw a swift glance at Honor. The dear face under the white hair was drawn and sad.

“Doctor Carmen thinks it best for him to see your grandfather, dear,” she interposed. “For my part, I’d love to keep Denny always, but it’s been almost impossible to make him stay upstairs as it is.”

The suggestion of danger to her Lady of Roses almost broke down Judy’s resolution for a moment, but a quick review of the circumstances gave her a fresh grip on her courage. From her standpoint, these two were overlooking an incontestable fact. She drew her bare feet tensely under her chair and looked at Carmen.

“Denny can’t go back to grandpap’s,” she insisted. “I tell you he’s dead! He’s buried with his pappy in Rogues’ Harbor graveyard. . . . You ain’t rememberin’ that, are you?”

David frowned.

“Granddaddy’s forgot we ever had Denny,” went on the girl drearily, “but he ain’t forgot how to use ’is cane, an’ when I say that, ’tain’t nothing against my grandfather. I don’t give a whoop from Hell how he bangs me—but—but if Denny got out of Pappy Bill’s grave, an’ went back to the farmhouse, Sliver Jim’d kill all that’s left of him——”

She stopped in the middle of her statement, her imagination at work with Olive, her despair—her desperate

condition, and her cousin's whispered repetition of Shuckies's words, "Worse'n death."

"An'," she burst out again, "what Jim'd do to me—Oh, God!"

David Carmen got up and went to the door and stood for a while looking out into the Garden of Glory. He was beginning to catch Judy's point of view. The course of action he'd mapped out for himself didn't seem so simple now. He came back and sat down.

"Judy, your grandfather is Denny's legal guardian, and I feel Mrs. Lessington ought to be——"

"I don't want nothing harmful to come to anyone," interrupted the girl, "but one thing's sure, you can't take a dead kid back to his home."

"But if your grandfather finds the child is here," Carmen countered quickly, "it would mean trouble for us all. Not that I'm thinking of myself, I'm not! I only want to protect Mrs. Lessington."

Judy puckered her brow into a network of wrinkles. The doctor had flanked her first position. The possibility that someone might discover Denny at the House of Mystery compelled her to shift her ground of defense. If she couldn't protect Denny on the theory that he was dead and buried, why she'd have to save him alive and kicking, that was all!

"An' I'm thinkin' of what's left of Denny," she muttered, "an' you've got to think of him, too. See?"

"But what is there to think about?" asked Carmen, impatiently. "Lord, what a scrape! I tell you, Judy, my telephone bell never rings but what I think I'm going to hear something has been discovered about that boy."

"They can't find nothing about him unless they see 'im," she retorted. "An' I guess you'd feel a lot worse'n you do now, mister, if some one killed Denny, an' worse'n killed me."

Neither of her hearers misunderstood her. David saw red and contemplated a trip to Rogues' Harbor to thrash the girl's persecutors, and Honor, horrified, cried out. Judy went directly to her side at one bound.

"Mam, you know I've told you lots of times about grand-

pap, but I couldn't tell half about Sliver Jim if I talked 'til tomorrow. You don't know Sliver nor granddaddy."

Honor bowed her head. Only too well did she know Grandfather Ketchel.

"I been thinkin' a lot of things lately," continued Judy, impetuously. "You an' him," she waved her hand toward Carmen, "are big, fine, strong folks. Can't you think of some place where Denny could go, where he'd get well? He can't go back home. I say he can't, not if I have to lug 'im off in the woods an' keep him there!"

"Couldn't we put him somewhere on a farm to board, David?" Honor suggested appealingly. "At least, until Judy feels differently about it."

"That's it, sir," said Judy, quick to see a way out, "bundle the baby——"

A child's high voice came from upstairs.

"Choo, choo, shoot, bang! Chop off a Hun's head, Dave," it squeaked.

David Carmen burst out laughing, and to save her life, Honor couldn't resist smiling, but Judy, shaking with nerves wrought to the point of breaking, kept on,

"Bundle 'im into your car some day, an' take 'im to some—some place 'til grandpap——" She sent a glance from the man to the woman—"I don't want poor, old granddaddy to die, God knows I don't, but he can't see nothing but hate because of the Fatherland, my grandpap can't. He hates me, an' he'd kill the baby. . . . Please, both of you, please."

David Carmen rose and walked to and fro; his hands thrust deep into his pockets. When he stepped to look out of doors, the mist in his eyes obscured the colors in the flowers and shrubs. He nodded his head in quick decision and turned about.

"All right," he agreed, "we'll do it. I'll find a place right away where he'll get well. Denny isn't really sick——"

"Bang!" shrieked Denny from above. "Another damned German gone to blazes."

Honor sighed and shook her head.

"I can't seem to teach the dear child not to swear," she apologized. "Every day I talk to him about it."

"I imagine there's plenty of oaths thrown Germany's way, besides Denny's," offered David. Then, clearing his voice, he continued, "Judy, I'm glad it's settled this way. Before I take him, Mrs. Lessington'll let you know."

"An' he's dead an' buried yet, eh?" queried Judy, eagerly.

"As dead as he ever was," grinned Carmen.

"Ain't that bully?" answered Judy, softly, "an' I'm givin' you my best thanks, doctor."

After Doctor Carmen had taken his leave, she sat in the living room very quietly while Honor was walking with him to the car. Judy's mind, at rest now about Denny, went back to the red-haired boy under the trees, and when Mrs. Lessington came into the sitting room, she found a very different Judy, a smiling Judy, dimpling with gladness.

"Wasn't that nice of Doc Carmen?" the girl said. "Why, if Denny gets to a farm where there's lots of milk, he'll grow as big as this house."

"Your grandfather—how is he today?" Honor asked, sitting down.

"As well as he'll ever be! . . . I'm glad he's forgot 'bout the baby. Poor, old grandpap! He's troubles 'nough without bein' haunted by Denny."

A silence fell over them, Judy considering what she was about to say to the Lady of Roses, and Honor mourning over the occupants of the Ketchel farmhouse.

"There's something else I wanted to ask you, mam," began Judy, at length. "Now, you got a hull lot of flowers, an' you couldn't use 'em all if everybody in Ithaca got a bunch. Why can't I— Oh, say yes, please! Why can't I take some to Ithaca today an' sell 'em? I'd make some money that way. Can't I, please?"

"I'd rather give you the money than have you do that," Honor said gravely.

Judy looked down at her bare feet. She wanted shoes, and she wanted money for other things, and to get it she had to earn it.



"If you'd make me take money, I'd have to give it to granddaddy. Once, when he was mad, I promised if I ever got any money give to me, I'd not use a cent of it for myself. But if I'd earn some, that'd be mine. See?"

"It isn't that I don't want you to have the flowers, dear. You know that! But I can't have you go about the streets! I'm afraid for you, that's why I refuse."

"Afraid of what?" demanded Judy.

"You're—you're almost a woman, Judy," answered Mrs. Lessington. "Men might——"

"Glory be! I get the flowers," rejoiced Judy. "No man in the hull of Ithaca could be worse'n Silver Jim, an' I got him right where he can't even squeal." Judy stopped and slipped her hand into her pocket and drew forth the little, red book. "An' I got this, too! The old devil himself couldn't hurt me with this in my pocket. Now, ain't that so, mam?"

Honor Lessington's face crimsoned. "Except ye become as little children," she thought. Her own puny, doubting faith was put to shame by Judy's spontaneous confidence.

"Ain't it so?" Judy repeated, tapping the book.

"Yes! Yes, it's so," sighed Honor.

Judy jumped up gleefully.

"Then let me have a basket today," she exulted, "an' I'll go 'long to Ithaca. There's goin' to be a parade an' I'll sell a lot."

"But if any man says anything to you he shouldn't——"

"Oh, I'll shut 'im up quick," laughed the girl, confidently. "I know how."

Then the thought of Theodore Kingsland brought a blush to her face. Perhaps, she ought to tell Mrs. Lessington about him! But Honor had spoken only of wicked men, and Teddy Kingsland wasn't that.

"You're heaps good, mam," she murmured brokenly.

"And you're my pretty goldylocks!" replied Honor.

And Judy remembering that a boy had called her pretty, dimpled shyly.

"I'm awful glad of it. Thanks, mam!"



## CHAPTER XXIII

### LEGS OF BRONZE

JUDY KETCHEL felt like the proverbial fish out of water, standing there at the corner of State and Cayuga Streets in the City of Ithaca. The whole town, debecked with flags and bunting, was a red, white and blue revelation to the girl who had known but the wilderness of Rogues' Harbor and Lake Cayuga. She stared about her, drinking delightful draughts of patriotism, . . . intensely excited by the throngs of people passing through the streets. They were all strangers to her and so gorgeously dressed she felt like running away to the Garden of Glory, or back to grandpap's. She couldn't though, even if she did feel ashamed of her bare feet, and of the loose hanging blouse, cotton to every thread, for first and foremost, she had to discover what Sliver Jim and the Citizens of the World intended to do. Then too, she wanted to sell the flowers in the basket hanging on her arm.

She looked lovingly upon the blossoms, Honor had cut for her. May blossoms glowed in their full maturity, and June buds nestled their baby heads amidst the moss she'd gathered from the rock-shadowed places in the small gorge beyond the House of Mystery. In imagination, she pictured the shoes she'd buy if she could sell them all and anticipated the pleasure she'd feel in exhibiting them to Teddy Kingsland.

Then, out of the turmoil that surged around her, came sweet and clear, sounds that made her forget herself. Across there by the Clinton Hotel, a brass band was sending forth into the bright sunshine, the National Anthem. Judy found it difficult to keep her feet still.

She'd never been so near a band before. Of course, in the summer when picknickers passed by on Lake Cayuga for a day's frolic, she had heard low melodies drift

from the Lake steamers. For the moment, she forgot Sliver Jim, Senator Kingsland, and everyone else in the loud crash of the drums and the high tones of the cornets.

Someone recalled her attention by asking if her flowers were for sale. Yes, they were, and for a few minutes she was busy with her new trade. Each coin given her in exchange for a flower, she dropped into her pocket alongside the little, red Bible.

The steady flow of people coming from all directions toward Dewitt Park assured Judy that the parade would start from there. She could see a long line of motor cars, reaching almost to Cascadilla Creek. Young girls and boys about her own age were massed in the park, and every fibre of her being went out in a great desire to join the parade, to walk through the streets of Ithaca, that she might show she didn't stand by the Fatherland even if her name was Ketchel. This she didn't consider seriously, however. She glanced down at her bare feet, at her sun-browned legs showing beneath the hem of her skirt. Of course, she couldn't.

Suddenly, from all along State Street she heard cheers, and craned her neck to catch a glimpse of the cause of that demonstration. She wanted to shriek too, simply because the spirit of the crowd was infectious, but so used was she to self effacement that she could not join them until she saw something that caused her heart to give a great bound. The flower basket hung loosely to her arm, its contents forgotten. Joyously she opened her mouth and added her voice to the tribute the crowd was rendering.

There, in State Street, coming slowly toward the corner where she stood, was an automobile covered with red, white and blue flags. At the wheel of the machine sat Teddy Kingsland, his head capless, his shining hair glistening red in the sun. Beside him sat Doctor Carmen. Judy's first glance took in those two men, then she saw at the side of the car, a man astride a great, black horse, the animal lifting his head nervously and his eyes agleam with excitement. Judy felt a throb of pride. . . . That

straight, thin figure, sitting erect in the saddle, was Senator Kingsland, her good, good friend.

As the Kingsland motor and the Kingsland steed approached the corner where Judy was standing, she shrank back, thrilled and palpitating. She didn't want the boy beside Doctor Carmen to see her.

Only a few hours before he had asked to kiss her, and for a few blessed moments her head had lain against his breast, but that had been away off there near the Garden of Glory where no eye could see them. She had tried to tell herself that Ithaca wasn't Rogues' Harbor country. Her shyness passed the moment the machine turned north on Cayuga. She wanted Teddy to know she was there, that the heart and soul of her belonged to him. All her effort could hardly still her feverish desire to get nearer him, to jump off the curb and take up a position behind his automobile. She grew limp and weak all of a sudden, and a few flowers tumbled from the basket on her arm to the street. By the time she had hastily gathered them up, Senator Kingsland on the prancing charger, and the flag-bedecked car were travelling northward toward Dewitt Park.

A new emotion hurt Judy's throat. It seemed as if she were going to lose them forever. There were misty tears in her blue eyes when she saw them turn at the corner of Buffalo Street and take their places at the head of the parade. Through the straight, cleared path along Cayuga Street, she could see the black horse stand up on his hind legs and dance to the music of the band. Her own nerves tingled until her knees became almost too weak to support her.

Hadn't David Carmen explained to her what calamities it would bring to the whole world if the Fatherland triumphed over those warring countries across the sea? Ithaca, beautiful Ithaca, was showing her best at that moment for the great cause of liberty, and Ithaca's best were Roderick Kingsland and Teddy Kingsland. At least, they were so in Judy Ketchel's mind. It seemed in some way these two men belonged to her; the equestrian

because he had assured her he was her friend, and the auto-driver— The girl felt a warm glow suffuse her whole being. The mist dried on her lashes—Teddy had told her he loved her!

Then over by the band, she saw Sliver Jim wriggle his way through the crowd and take a position almost in the road. Her mind traveled swiftly back to that moment when, listening at her bedroom chimney-pipe, she had heard Shuckies declare that the "Citizens of the World," had decreed old Kingsland should go first.

What did Sliver intend to do there among the mass of people on the street? She knew he was a coward, and he'd scarcely dare do anything in broad daylight. Also she believed he was like other evil folk who did their wicked deeds under cover of night. This conviction made her a little happier, although she wished Jim weren't there at all.

Then a blast from the trumpets came clearly to her ears. Somebody very near shouted that the parade was about to start. Judy looked from Jim Shuckies to Dewitt Park.

Teddy Kingsland had started his automobile, and the sable steed, urged forward by Senator Kingsland, was cavorting and backing and sidling all over the road. Sharply the powerful legs stamped the iron shoes on the pavement. Proudly he flung up his arched neck and tossed the heavy forelock from his flashing eyes. To the blare of the bugles, he responded with motions indicative of tremendous power under severe restraint.

Judy thrilled again with pride and delight. How easily and surely her friend handled the splendid brute!

On either side, the people waved their hats and handkerchiefs as Teddy's automobile moved slowly up Cayuga Street just behind Senator Kingsland. In the excitement of the moment, Judy forgot Sliver Jim.

How solemnly beautiful it all was. How majestic and awe inspiring, those waving flags and endless lines of people only waiting for their turn to march through Ithaca under America's colors. The sight and sound of it all made Judy's blood leap to her face and back again.

Her grateful, young heart almost burst with love for the three there in front. She loved David Carmen for what he had done for Denny, Senator Kingsland because he had said hoarsely, "Child, I am your friend," and Teddy! Well, there was but one Teddy in the world!

Near the corner of State Street, Teddy stopped his machine, and simultaneously the long lines to the north came to a halt. The black horse whirled in his tracks, reared and pranced, his eyes dilated, his nostrils steaming, but the man on his back had a steady grip on the reins.

Teddy was waving his hand in response to the cheers, Doctor Carmen's hat was lifted aloft in his fingers, and Senator Kingsland bowed and smiled as the people howled his name.

Then Judy caught sight of Sliver Jim again. He had pressed a little forward, just beyond the little cigar stand on the curb, his pale eyes centered on Senator Kingsland. Judy saw him take a cigarette from his pocket and light it. Sliver always smoked cigarettes when he didn't have his pipe.

Then suddenly she saw something shoot out from Sliver Jim's hand, a red thing with a thread of smoke trailing from it. Judy's eyes followed the giant fire-cracker in its flight through the air, saw the small tail of it brighten in its downward course like a fire-fly at twilight, and fall close to the hind heels of the high-strung thorough-bred.

The loud explosion that followed seemed for the moment to paralyze the animal, then, like a stone sent from a sling, he sprang into the air! Around and around he whirled like a dancing dervish, catching the bit in his strong teeth.

The throng at the corner, terrified, backed desperately away from the clashing feet of the mighty beast gone mad, and Jim Shuckies slipped away in the confusion. Senator Kingsland, white to his ears, was doing his best to regain control of his snorting, foaming mount, but giant teeth were holding the iron bit, and terror had destroyed the habit of obedience.



Unlike the frightened masses, Judy Ketchel considered only the rider, who belonged to her by that blessed right of friendship. Quicker than thought, she had dropped the flower basket and was in the middle of the road just as the great, black brute bolted across the corner.

There, but a few feet ahead in his path, was a girl with teeth set together closer than his own, her eyes steely blue with undaunted purpose. One stride brought him almost on top of her. She leapt into the air, and her strong, brown, bare arms flung upward and around the creature's ebony neck. In the streaming mane, her fingers locked themselves together in a deathlike grip. Senator Kingsland, swaying on the saddle, saw her white face, her staring, blue eyes, and for a fraction of a second thought the ghost-boy was glaring at him, making mock of his peril. Then suddenly, he recognized her. . . . Judy Ketchel was trying to save him!

For an instant only, the charger halted, tossing his head to rid himself of the unusual burden, then on, up State Street, he raced. Although the girl's weight hung from a point far up on his neck, almost to his ears, he carried his head high and swung her pendulumwise in time to every vigorous leap he made. The power of his action was awe-inspiring. "Like the Black Diamond Express rushing down Trumansburg Hill," said one, describing it afterwards.

Heavy splashes of foam fell down over Judy's shoulders, but still she clung, for there, just above her, gazing down into her upturned eyes, was her friend. He looked so ghastly, so feeble, hanging for his life to the flying mane that a sudden, sickening sense of her own inadequacy took possession of her.

Another thought, bright like a flash from God's sky across the black threat of the storm clouds, brought into her mind the words she'd relied on in agonized times gone by.

"Look ever to Jesus, an' he'll carry you through," Judy screamed to the toppling man.

Every one of those blessed words reached his ears, and,



because a momentary faith stirred in him, Senator Kingsland steadied himself and snatched at the reins.

\* \* \* \*

To avoid the line of march, traffic from the lower end of town had been diverted to Green Street and along Tioga. Hurrying to cross State Street before the parade came up from Cayuga, a taxi reached the corner in time for its passengers to view the runaway, to see the crazed animal dash by, to watch Senator Kingsland loosened in the saddle, tug futilely at the reins, and to gasp in horror at the yellow-haired girl, her bare legs, shining like polished bronze in the sunlight, swinging so precariously just above the terrible, striking hoofs.

Sarah Kingsland uttered a cry, and Peter flung himself from the taxi to the street and shouted to his son, Teddy, who was driving his motor madly along after the frightened horse. Near the Ithaca Hotel, the black brute threw up his head, trying to get rid of the girl. He opened his jaws, and then Senator Kingsland with the last bit of his remaining strength dragged the bit backward into the tender flesh, and the horse came to a sudden standstill.

Judy felt someone take hold of her, and a voice, a dear, dear voice speak to her. She was so tired for a moment that she couldn't hear all Teddy murmured. Afterwards she remembered he had called her his sweet, his dear, and when she regained control of her scattered senses, she was standing with both her hands in Senator Kingsland's.

He was looking down upon her, his body shaking, his face twitching. Then he slipped to the pavement, overcome at last by that grip at his heart.

David Carmen went to him instantly. Teddy stood holding the black horse. For a moment, Peter Kingsland looked down at Judy Ketchel, and she stared back at him. He took note of her extreme poverty, scanning her from the yellow head to the bare toes.

While Judy was undergoing this inspection with what composure she could, Sarah Kingsland came hurrying up, frantic with anxiety. She noticed the long body

stretched out in a little, cleared space in the crowd. Impulsively, she seized Judy's arm and shook her.

"Is he hurt, girl?" she cried. "What'd you do to him?"

Too astonished to reply, Judy looked helplessly from one to the other. She thought both of them detestable, and she was even more frightened of the haughty, red-haired man than she had been during her wild ride.

"I wouldn't shake her any more," Peter remonstrated sarcastically. "She saved the Pater's life, that's all!"

When Sarah had dropped Judy's arm, she broke into a torrent of apologies and explanations from which Judy gathered that the two were Senator Kingsland's son and daughter who had been living in Germany.

"My sister and I're very grateful to you, young lady," Peter interrupted. "We'll see you don't lose by it. If you'll tell me your name, I'll send you some money."

Judy's yellow head came up with a jerk. This man was offering her money for helping her friend. The blue glance she sent back at Peter was hostile enough.

"Your money ain't no good, sir," she drawled. "I'm glad your daddy wasn't hurt such a lot that Doc Carmen can't fix 'im up." She paused, thrust her hand back to her shoulders, "You Kingslands sure have got awful spitty horses. I'm slobbered clean down to my heels. Good-bye, mister!"

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### YOU'LL BE MY WOMAN

ADMIRING glances and enthusiastic words of praise accompanied Judy through the crowd. As quickly as possible, she made her way to the opposite corner and hurried down Aurora Street. Her limbs throbbed with pain, and queer, thick noises beat in her ears. By the time she reached the big, stone church at the corner of Mill Street, the fever of excitement in her veins began to subside a little.

The foremost impression she carried away was the conviction that she didn't like Teddy's father. She recognized there was a difference between the two men and concluded according to her primitive standards that Theodore was kind, and his father wasn't.

Along the road to the corner of the Lake and on beyond the Salt Works, the sun blazed fiercely. Lake Cayuga's surface was perfectly smooth and fairly steamed in the heat. Some distance from McKinney's was a little spot, shaded by low, hanging willows and cooled by the babbling creek which tumbled down the hillside, and Judy was so tired and hot, she sat down there to rest for a little while.

From where she was, she could see Willow Point. Judy loved the Point, especially when it rained. She loved the stately, age-old trees that shrouded under their spreading limbs the row of well kept cottages. To the imaginative girl they held strange mysteries of living things. She sighed sleepily.

It seemed such a long time since the day Denny had left the farm—such a long line of days, each so full and so quickly merged into the vast infinity of yesterdays, since she had last called God's birds from the woodland. She'd had so much to do lately. There seemed no more

spare moments to spend in the fodder lot. The complications of the human affairs at Rogues' Harbor had multiplied hour by hour, and Judy realized each new complication had made her a part of itself.

She was happy in her own little way, just then. To lie at ease on the soft cushion of decaying leaves under the willows, . . . to listen to the purl of the brook and all the other familiar sounds of the lakeside, was so good. Then too a great feeling of thanksgiving possessed her. Hadn't she helped her friend? Denny was provided for, and Teddy loved her!

Five minutes later Judy was asleep, one bare arm thrown on the green grass, the other rounded under her neck, . . . her curls, the pillow upon which her head rested.

She dreamed of Honor Lessington, of Denny in the Garden of Glory, and then of Teddy Kingsland. Teddy's father drifted through some minutes of that abandoned, sleepy time, and a slight frown puckered her brow at the splendid, terrifying image of Peter Kingsland. Then the little wrinkles faded again as Teddy took his smiling way into her slumbering vision. He seemed so near, and the music of his voice came so distinctly to her, like the chiming of the college bells! All the dear names, he had called her followed one by one. She wanted to reach him, to go with him wherever he went, for he was drifting away. The dreamer put out a small hand to detain the red-haired boy floating before her mind's eye. How curiously elusive he was, ever keeping just beyond the touch of her fingers.

All at once, it seemed as though another man's image blotted out the shining, red hair. Before she was awake enough to see anything, the impulse came to her to sit up, but when she tried to, something held her back. . . . Something burdened her neck! She made a greater effort, only to feel her head pressed more closely to the ground. Slowly she turned her eyes as if fearful of what she might see. Sliver Jim was seated by her side, and one of his great, brown hands was at her throat!

The ugly frown of his brows, the set determination of

his thick lips put an end to all the drowsiness in Judy's brain. She was horribly frightened. He looked so cruel and hateful. Was he going to kill her as Olive said he might? Or was it the thing "worser'n death" he contemplated? No sign of a smile broke the hard lines about his brutal mouth or softened the fierce eyes. As a rule, he winked at her, or grinned in that stupid way of his.

"You think you're smart, you huzzy," he gritted at length. "What's made you so offish lately? Go on an' tell me before I cork you forever."

His fingers closed tighter, and Judy choked for breath. Her lids trembled and lifted heavily as if a weight dragged them down. Jim's face was so close to hers she could hear his rumbling rage as he breathed.

"Let go, then," she gasped, "an' I'll tell you."

Sliver Jim took a hasty glance around. No one was in sight anywhere. It was a holiday, and even the people who lived the entire year on the lake shore were in Ithaca.

He slipped his fingers from her throat to her arm.

"Get up!" he growled.

Judy struggled to a sitting position. If Jim hadn't clutched her so tightly, she'd have made a dash for liberty. But she was helpless—caught in his iron hand.

Judy moved a little, and her lip quivered.

"You're pinchin' my arm awful, Jim. It hurts!"

His face went red with passion. "Hurt you, do I, eh, huzzy? . . . I love hurtin' you? I ain't started yet with what I'm going to do to you, Jude Ketchel!"

Jim's fingers gripped tighter the girl's tender flesh. His leering, red lips came so close to hers that she drew back her head.

Angered by this, Jim snatched at her. In his free hand, he caught several curls.

"Come here!" he slithered. "I'm goin' to kiss you."

And before Judy could wriggle away, Jim made good his threat, his thick lips travelling in sensuous slowness over her neck and face. In that awful moment, Judy knew that some men's kisses stung and hurt worse than grandpap's cane ever had. Sliver drew back and looked

at her. Oh, if some one would only come along, some one to save her this once! But Jim was right when he'd reckoned 'twas a holiday and everybody had gone to town. She didn't dare scream, for Jim would silence her instantly, and unmindful of other dangerous times when she had prayed and been delivered, she stared at the lake as at a friend too far away to help her. She'd rather be at the bottom of its deepest depths than there with Sliver Jim.

Shuckies' snarling voice brought her eyes flashing up to his.

"You wasn't satisfied to take a good, decent German like me for your man!" he grumbled. "No, but you go buttin' into your grandpap's business like you did about the brat." Jim's redoubled grip on her arm made Judy dizzy. He was hurting her as he'd hurt the baby. What was it that had saved Denny that night at Rogues' Harbor? Then she thrilled, as her mind from habit repeated,

"He will carry you through!" Twice, three times, during Jim's hesitation, she repeated it passionately to herself.

"Mebbe I'll have to kill you yet," muttered Jim, "but I'm goin' to give you a honest chance from a honest German. Today, now, you'll be my woman! Afterwards—I'll marry you—mebbe."

Again Judy went dizzy.

"I'd ruther you'd kill me, Sliver," she groaned. "Go on an' kill me." She grew suddenly anxious to die there in the sunshine. "You can throw me in the lake, an' nobody'll know. Only be good to grandpap an'—an' Ollie."

"You'll be my woman first," asserted Jim, grimly. "Then, if I can't beat your hellish howlin' for this rotten country out of you, I'll do just like I said, kill you, see? You understand, eh, Jude?"

She bent her head. She had plainly understood his every word, his horrid meaning piercing even the tumult going on in her soul.



"Can I say something to you, now, Sliver?" she breathed.

"Ja! Go ahead," directed Jim.

Although he was hurting her dreadfully, Judy had to give her last commands to him. She knew when the time came for something "worsen death" she'd fight, tooth and nail, until Jim would kill her in desperation. She shuddered. Very soon, perhaps, before her birdies went to bed, before the sun went away for the night, she would be lying in that stretch of blue water.

"Go ahead," commanded Jim. "What're you laggin' about?"

Judy looked up into the man's pale eyes. All hope to live had left her, but first must she make a deal with Sliver Jim.

"I guess you'll like killin' me, awful well, won't you, Sliver?" she stammered.

"Ja, an' if you don't mind what I say to you I'm goin' to," returned Jim.

"I'd terrible much like to have you promise you'd be good to grandpap," she went on, "—he's gettin' awful old."

"An' awful childish!" supplemented Sliver Jim.

Judy sighed.

"Just like Denny was," she murmured low.

Shuckies face went ashen.

"Denny's one of the things why I got to croak you, Jude," he broke out, "unless makin' you my woman changes you a lot."

"An' there's Ollie," Judy trailed on. "She's a good German, awful anxious over the Fatherland. An', Jim——"

"Shut up about Ollie! She ain't no place in our talk."

Even in the very presence of death, Judy remembered the wonderglow on Olive's drab face when the girl had mentioned the baby who would come to Rogues' Harbor in the winter.

"Mebbe when I'm dead, Jim," she said dreamily, "you'll like her better. Ollie's awful fond of you, Sliver."

Her face was pitifully tragic, tragic enough to have made a man less brutal than Shuckies refrain from the thing he did. With the flat of his hand, he struck her, and the blow that fell sharply on the crown of her curls brought a cry from her lips, shrill, piercing and terrified.

Then Judy heard what she thought was some great animal crashing through the underbrush of the hill behind her.

Jim's hand had come down upon her mouth to stay another cry. Then, then—— "Goodest and best God," trailed through Judy's mind, "Even Cumming's mully cow'd be better'n no friend at all."

It wasn't a mully cow that suddenly landed on Jim! It was another man, a big man, whose strong fingers tore Shuckies away from her so completely that she was free to get to her feet. As she scrambled up Judy saw two figures rolling together on the ground and, oh, the glory of it! She saw too, a shock of glistening red hair and huge fists dealing Jim terrible blows. She stood a moment looking dazedly at them, then she remembered her promise to Olive, "You'll get Jim for the baby's honest to God pappy before snow flies, see if you don't, honey!" A dead Sliver wouldn't be any good to Olive or to the baby coming when the fields were buried in the white snowdrifts. The terrible blows on Jim's head would kill him, Judy was sure.

"Don't," she shrieked, "Don't do that! . . . Don't kill 'im!"

Jim lay flat on his back, and Teddy Kingsland was sitting on his bony body. At her shrill words, he left off beating the other man.

"That's just what I'm going to do—kill him now," threatened Teddy, the male within him surging to the point of carrying out his threat.

Judy sprang to him.

"No!" she exclaimed. "Just let 'im go," and then thinking of Olive, she entreated, "There's a reason! Don't hit 'im again!"

Teddy got up slowly. He very much wanted to drop

down again on that limp German, but the girl, standing there seemed to hold him back. Jealousy leaped at him, as he recalled her after expression.

"There's a reason! Don't hit 'im again!" she had said. What reason? demanded the man's love within Theodore's pounding heart. Did Judy Ketchel love that slinking thing? And again, Teddy wanted to jump on Shuckies with all his might and main.

The girl, now purple-eyed, palpitating and wet-lashed, touched his arm.

"Sliver ain't very much good as a man," she commented, "but let 'im go. . . . Help him up!"

"I'll be damned if I do!" snapped Teddy, fire flashing in his glance.

"Then, I will," she retorted, her blue eyes dilating.

Darkly, Teddy watched her approach the spread-out, inert figure. He saw her bend to touch the man, and something within him rose in open revolt. He simply couldn't stand the sight, and one long stride took him to Shuckies' side. He flashed a red-brown angry glance at Judy.

"Get away," he said, "I'll help him."

Then Judy sat down and waited. Sliver Jim was lifted to his feet. Her heart sang even above the pain she felt in her arm and head when she saw the two stagger off to the lake. She could never tell afterwards how long she waited for Teddy to come back. She only knew that over and over, her soul had sung that refreshing refrain, "He will carry you through."

A voice, steady and deep, brought her back to the day and what had occurred.

"My grandfather wants you at Kingsland Court." Then Teddy made a backward jerk with his thumb toward the boat houses on the shore. "That fellow's all right, though I did beat him up a bit. . . . Will you come now?"

Not for a long minute did she speak. Her breast heaved, for in the voice she loved, the voice that had followed her through her sun dreams, there was icy frigidity. Why should he speak like that, why should his eyes look

so fierce instead of smiling at her? Judy had never been jealous in her life. She could not understand the change in Theodore.

"Will you come along to Kingsland Court?" he repeated curtly.

"Sure," nodded Judy. "Sure, I will!"

While they were walking to the road where he had ditched his car, Teddy explained in measured tones why he had come and the purple leapt into Judy's eyes, because she knew those precious words, "He will carry you through," had brought him just in time.

A sweet smile played with the dimples, and her soul sang the song her lips could not utter just then. She wasn't Jim's woman, neither was she dead in the bottom of the lake, but beside her was Teddy Kingsland, even if there were an unusual flare in his eyes; and she was going to her friend.

As if she'd been one of Ithaca's young belles, Teddy led her gravely to the automobile. She stepped in and sat down. No word was spoken between the boy and girl as they whirled onward toward Kingsland Court. In the same brooding silence, Teddy escorted her up the broad, stone steps into the hall.

When she was led into an enormous room hung in shades of browns and dark red, Judy saw David Carmen standing by a table, and Senator Kingsland stretched out on the bed, his eyes closed.

## CHAPTER XXV

### KING OF AMERICA

THAT anything could be so splendid as this wonderful chamber had never dawned on Judy Ketchel. Its airy spaciousness impressed her with a sense of breadth and bigness; something like the feeling she had known on clear, windy nights on the heights above Cayuga Lake.

While she was hesitating, Doctor Carmen nodded to her reassuringly, stepped forward and took her hand.

"I'm so glad you're here, Judy. He wanted you," he whispered. "Oh! now, he's awake."

Senator Kingsland's eyes were centered upon the girl, and she smiled at him. She crossed to the bed and sat down in a chair.

"The horse's joltin' must a made you feel bad," she murmured, with quivering lips. "An' you wanted to know if I was all right, I 'spose. I'm righter'n right. . . . So go to sleep."

"I wish you'd stay a while," panted Kingsland.

A spring of love welled up in Judy and overflowed in tears of sympathetic happiness.

"Sure, sure, I will, as long as you like," she promised.

Donald Ricardi was standing beside the chair the girl sat in. What terrible things his hard, blue eyes threatened! Ever since the accident that gaze had been pitilessly insistent. Kingsland shuddered, and his lids fell.

"I want to help you!" he said in a very low tone.

"You have, sir," Judy assured him. "You've done heaps." Then she turned to Carmen. "Must he go to sleep now?"

"Yes," answered David, "and he will, now he's seen you."

Impetuously, Judy knelt down beside the bed.

"You're goin' to sleep now, ain't you, good man?" she

implored. "If you'll do that, then I'll stop with you; if you don't, then I go!"

"I will," sighed the old man, "if you'll stay."

For a long time there was silence in the room. Judy remained on her knees by the bed, Kingsland's fingers interlocked in hers, and David Carmen seated in a large arm chair.

\* \* \* \* \*

Meanwhile Theodore Kingsland had gone to find the new arrivals. There had been so much confusion he'd hardly had a glimpse of his wonderful father!

When Peter called a harsh, "Come in," to the boy's knock, Teddy entered the room. His father and his aunt were together, but the expressions in their eyes brought the boy to an abrupt halt. Somehow he felt chilled.

"Graddy's better," he said lamely.

The news so important to the lad didn't soften the angry look on his aunt's face, and the frown on his father's brow still remained.

"Where have you been, son?" Peter asked curtly, "I sent Briggs to find you."

Teddy made an outward gesture with his hands.

"Graddy sent me——" His statement was checked by the impression that his information would be unwelcome though he didn't know why. "Graddy was awfully nervous, and Doctor Carmen said he must have his own way. I went after Judy Ketchel."

Peter started to speak, but his more impetuous sister's nervous ejaculation cut him off.

"Judy Ketchel! Why, who's she, Theodore?"

Aunt Sarah's temper was a tradition in the family, but she needn't jump on Judy. Teddy didn't like it and he wouldn't stand for it.

"She's the girl who saved Graddy from being killed today," he explained resentfully.

Sarah got to her feet. Jealousy, full grown, had taken instant possession of her. Her eyes narrowed, and her pulses beat with anger.



"Teddy," she cried, "you don't mean that bare-footed, bare-legged girl——"

"Sure. She's upstairs with graddy now," interrupted Teddy. "He simply wouldn't go to sleep and Doctor Carmen said he must be humored. . . . So I went and got her."

"She'll not stay in this house. . . . Not while I'm here," snapped Sarah.

Peter laughed harshly, a laugh his son didn't like.

"Don't be a fool, sis! You haven't forgotten father didn't want either one of us with him."

"It's my home," said Sarah, crossly, "and I ought to be with my father."

Teddy's face went pale. He grew suddenly angry with the two of them.

"Graddy didn't even want me," he retorted, "and Dave tried to get him to let you and the pater come up, but when graddy sets his mind you might as well try to turn the north wind."

Sarah shot a glance at Peter. Their exclusion from Senator Kingsland's room had hurt, and his preference for this girl was positively insulting.

"And Judy Ketchel's a nice girl," continued Teddy, straightening his shoulders.

Then Sarah lifted her hands in a gesture expressive of utter hopelessness. She threw herself down sobbing on the divan. Superciliously, Peter raised his brows and surveyed Theodore.

"A clod-hopping tom-boy, Ted," he taunted. "Is that what you call a *nice* girl, my son?"

The boy's temper was rising by the minute. The sneer in the tones of his father's voice was even more insulting than his words.

"She saved graddy's life," he rapped back roughly. "And what's more, I love her, so there. From now on, you'll please remember that. . . . Anyway, I'm going to war, now that you're home, pater, and graddy says he'll help Judy learn a lot of things girls need to know. When

"I get back," his shoulders lifted, and he caught a deep breath, "why, I'll marry her, if she'll have me!"

Meantime Peter continued his inspection of his stalwart son. So, this was what he had come home to find? Theodore insisting on enlisting to fight the Fatherland and in love with a hopeless hoyden!

"I'd like to talk to Ted a while, Satie," Peter said, trying to speak in steady tones. "You won't mind, liebchen!"

After Sarah had flounced out of the room, and son and father were alone, an embarrassed silence fell between them. Peter motioned the boy to a seat, and walked slowly up and down the room, himself.

"You haven't enlisted, Theodore?" he questioned finally.

Teddy shook his head.

"No, graddy was sure you'd be home soon, so I waited, but pater, I can, can't I?"

"Most certainly not," Peter wanted to cry out. It would never do for his son to fight against Germany, but he remembered the set, young mouth in those days when the boy chose Ithaca instead of Berlin. Teddy had to be handled with gloves, and Peter didn't dare speak too peremptorily. He smiled his brilliant smile, paused and allowed one of his beautiful hands to drop on his son's shoulder.

"Not yet," he refused. "No, not yet. You're young yet. The fact is, dear boy, I'm only just home, and I want you a little while to myself."

Teddy's boyish heart bounded at his father's loving tones which lifted him to his feet.

"And I want to be with you too, pater." Then because he was young, patriotic and anxious to do his bit, he added, "but there's such a lot to be done, and I want to help."

Peter seized the boy's hand and gripped it strongly.

"Time enough to offer yourself, son," he asserted, "when we know just what's necessary. . . . We don't know yet what the government wants, Ted. Wait a little. We'll talk about this again."

The disappointment Teddy felt cooled the ardor he'd expressed a moment before, and with a muttered, "All right," he sat down again.

Peter crossed to the window and stood staring out upon a panorama of light and shadow over forest, field and city which he might have seen and did not. His mind was far away from Ithaca.

In contrast to the petty hindrances, his ambition was meeting at the very threshold of his return, he recalled the words the Queen of Prussia had addressed to him the last time he saw her. The Empress had congratulated him upon an article he'd written on The Peace of the World. The great lady had smiled directly into his eyes.

"There shall be peace, Herr Kingsland," she had said to him, "when my Lord, Wilhelm, is crowned King of England and France."

Peter remembered he had brought a wider smile to her Majesty's lips by adding,

"And King of America, too, your Grace!"

"And King of America, too, Herr Kingsland," the Queen had repeated softly.

"And why not?" thought Peter. It would be better for everybody and especially for him. Hadn't it been hinted, if he could stay the strong arm of the United States until France and England were conquered, and in turn the presumptuous Yankees had been sent under the yoke, on that day, he, Peter Kingsland, should stand on the soil of his native country, its dictator, subject only to his Majesty, Wilhelm. But between that great day and this were many months of labor, hard work for every "Citizen of the World," and much money to be spent in gathering together Germany's blood in America.

Peter's reverie continued for so long a time that Theodore rose and was almost out of the room when his father turned toward him.

"Just a moment, Ted," he said, and when the boy had halted, he began again. "This Ketchel girl, now, of course you can't marry her. It's impossible!"

Teddy detected an undertone in his father's voice, so

hard and unsympathetic, he recognized the hopelessness of argument.

"I don't intend to just yet, pater. Of course, you know that! But when I come back from the war——"

"You can't ever marry her," thrust in Peter. "She's not your kind. She's common."

"She's not!" shot back Teddy. . . . "I do beg pardon, pater," he said more gently, "for butting in that way, but Judy's not common. She's just poor, and the Kingslands don't need to care about money. We've got enough for every one of us."

"Have you said anything to her about it, Theodore?"

"Sure! Sure, I have," responded Teddy, "but I don't know yet whether she likes me, that's the rub. Why, Pater, ever since I first saw her——"

Peter made a graceful gesture with his hand.

"Let's drop that matter now," he temporized. "Your aunt feels exceedingly upset about your grandfather. To call in a stranger at such a time seems rather queer. . . . Where's Doctor Carmen?"

"I suppose he's with graddy," muttered Teddy. "I know he said he was going to stay all night."

"And the girl? Does she stay, too?" Peter's voice lowered almost to a growl.

"I don't know yet. It'll be as Doctor Carmen says. Graddy's been sick a lot lately, pater, and he just can't be crossed. His nerves're in bad shape, so Dave says. Shall I tell him you want him?"

"No! I'll hunt him up soon. But, son, I'd like to ask you not to see the Ketchel girl again, not even to take her home if she goes tonight."

Teddy couldn't imagine himself making any such promise. Of course, he'd take Judy home in his car. He had to. He thought of Sliver Jim Shuckies, and in rapid sequence, his mind ran over the events of the day. If ever a girl should be shown courtesy by the Kingsland family that girl was Judy Ketchel! He shook his head.

"I'd rather you wouldn't ask me that, pater," he said, and swinging on his heel, he went out.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE SOON COMING——

FOR some minutes after Theodore's departure, his father continued his bitter reflections. Finally, he went downstairs and found David Carmen seated in the library, reading. The doctor put down his book.

In a smiling, hasty survey, he took in the magnificent Peter from that crown of red hair to his shoes. His eyes came back to the powerful face. How foreign Peter had grown in his actions, and even more foreign in appearance! He would have looked much better, David thought, without the Vandyke beard and that well-waxed, upcurled moustache, so distinctly Prussian.

"Well, Pete," he said in his good-natured way, "this is rather a strenuous home coming, eh? . . . We'll bring the old gentleman out all right if he's kept quiet a few days."

Absentmindedly, Peter acknowledged David's greeting and sat down in one of the big chairs.

"That's good, Dave! . . . Teddy tells me the Ketchel girl is with him."

The statement was part exclamation, part question, and the upward inflection at the end of Kingsland's carefully articulated words gave Carmen the impression that Peter was really demanding why the girl was there at all.

"Yes," he nodded, "your father was so restless, constantly asking for Judy, I simply had to send for her."

Peter's irritation showed plainly in the dull red that rose in waves to his hair. During his interview with his son he had come to the conclusion that the connection between the Ketchel girl and the House of Kingsland must be broken off. Seconds passed in silence while he cogitated how best to bring this about.



"And you know too, I suppose, that Ted's in love with her?" he asked finally.

Carmen's stare caught the flashes of anger in Peter's eyes, then he grinned.

"Lord, no, you don't say!" he ejaculated. "Well, the kid's pretty enough to attract most any man!"

"She'll not rope in my son," answered Peter, his teeth making a distinct click as he set them together to conceal his rage.

David thought of Honor Lessington, of Denny in the Garden of Glory, and quick as a wink came the picture of the girl, swinging from the neck of a maddened horse.

"She's not the kind that ropes in a fellow, Peter," he said curtly. "If she had some education she'd fill any place, poor little thing."

"Ted's got some fool notion about having father educate her," commented Peter, "but it won't do."

A hint of humor drew small wrinkles into the corners of David's eyes, and a chuckle almost escaped from his throat, for beneath Peter's words he had detected his uneasiness. He'd known Teddy Kingsland a long time, and the boy had frequently disclosed the same purpose to have his own way that Peter was so arrogantly voicing.

"Well, time'll tell, I suppose, Pete," he drawled. "Sometimes young folks listen to their elders and sometimes they don't. . . . At any rate, Judy's needed here just now. Your father's taken a fancy to her. The poor old chap's nervous so I humor him all I can. . . . But do tell me about affairs abroad."

To follow the lead his friend had thrown out, it was necessary for Peter to turn his attention to larger and more important matters than Ted's enlistment and infatuation for the Ketchel girl. He thought of the Citizens of the World, of Germany's need of power in America, and considered it would be a distinct mark to his credit to interest David Carmen. Hadn't the powers in Berlin stated that the distracted, superstitious world could only be won over to Prussia through religion. "Talk God," Stein had said! A smile came back to his lips as



he fixed himself more comfortably in his chair. David Carmen was a good one to start preaching to.

"Have a cigarette, Dave?" he said, holding out his case.

"No! I'll smoke a cigar, if you don't mind, old man. . . . Peter, Teddy's dead crazy to go into the army. . . . You'll let him, of course."

Peter Kingsland looked at the speaker, and thought a moment.

"How can I when my principles are all against it, Dave?" he queried, touching lightly the ends of his mustache. "I'm a pacifist, pure and simple. As long as my son is under my control, I won't allow him to go in direct opposition to what I believe is right to God and man."

David's face gathered a frown.

"But, Peter, Ted's almost of age, and a walloping, big fellow too. He has a mind of his own and the right to think as he pleases. We've got to lick those Dutchmen before there'll be any peace. I'm for peace too and I know the way to get it. Give the Kaiser a damn, good licking, and there won't be any more war."

"That's not God's way," objected Peter, in his most sanctimonious manner. "That isn't overcoming evil with good, is it?"

A queer look settled about the doctor's mouth. Now was Peter Kingsland as purely religious as he was holding himself out to be? What was behind that handsome face, those brilliant, red-brown eyes? What seething in that mighty head?

"You haven't any idea that Almighty God is backing up that Prussian brute?" he countered. "You don't think the Kaiser's overcoming is good, do you? Now be honest Pete? . . . Do you?"

That was exactly what Peter did think, but he didn't dare to say so. He borrowed a subterfuge from the Yankees he so detested and asked a question instead.

"David, do you believe in Christ? Do you think his teachings wise and practical?"

Carmen flushed uncomfortably. He wasn't used to mixing religion with every day matters, and he'd never

considered the question anyway. It didn't seem to him worth while, either. He was a Christian, he assumed. He'd never thought about it much. He was inclined to waive the question aside as trivial, but Peter really seemed to be in earnest.

"Why, yes, Pete, I suppose so," he answered impatiently.

Peter's eyes snapped his satisfaction.

"Read the Sermon on the Mount, Dave," he advised. "You won't find in the Master's teachings justification for war under any circumstances. . . . Shall I quote some of his statements?"

Talk like this seemed so futile to David Carmen. He'd been thrilled to his depths by the magnificent response the Cornell undergraduates made to the call for volunteers. His mind came back from the mental picture of Ithaca's earnest and patriotic young men, to hear Peter's concluding quotation.

"Do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you."

He interrupted before Kingsland could begin another selection.

"I'm not much on theology, Pete, but I'm strong for democracy and beating the Germans. . . . So's Ted! . . . Considering you stick to your own notions, why not let the kid have the same right?"

"Because Theodore's way is not the right way," rejoined Peter, promptly.

Before replying, David contemplated the end of his cigar. Not in all Ithaca had he encountered such bigotry. Broad minded, large hearted in freedom and manliness, he could not comprehend it.

"But surely, Kingsland," he broke in presently, "you believe in democracy and liberty, don't you?"

"Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," quoted Peter, succinctly.

David flicked the ashes from his cigar. He was so disgusted with Peter Kingsland, he hardly dared trust himself to speak.

"But who's to determine the ways of Almighty God, and what He wants on this old earth?" he inquired, bending over.

Peter knew the man's name, but he didn't mention it. By some strange trick of memory there intruded into his mind the disrespectful, American parody of the Kaiser's exalted piety, "Me und Gott." He frowned slightly and hesitated a moment. Then his brow cleared.

"The person living nearest his precepts," he asserted ambiguously.

"And that man!" demanded Carmen. "Who's he?"

"He's not in this country," replied Peter.

Suspensions now thoroughly aroused, David got to his feet.

"Kingsland," he exclaimed hoarsely, "what's your idea?"

It came to Peter then he was getting into close quarters. It wouldn't do to expose his real purposes until he was certain of his man, and it was quite clear Carmen wasn't that. He waved his hand conciliatorily.

"Don't get excited, Dave," he smiled. Sit down. . . . I'm not wearing any mask, be assured of that! I'm an American like yourself, just as earnest and conscientious about this war business as you are, but there is a right way, the divine way to handle it."

David made a little gesture of protest, but the speaker disregarded it and went on very solemnly, his beautiful voice modulated to agree with the awful thought he was expressing,

"You and I, and all of us must deal in this matter with—with God."

The doctor slowly resumed his seat. In a way he was immensely relieved to know the trouble with Peter was nothing worse than religious mania, a well recognized product of the war.

"It's all so damned strange to hear you talk like this, Pete," he muttered. "What do you believe anyway? . . . You say the man's not in this country. . . . Are you a believer in the soon coming——"

Peter caught the thought instantly.

"That's it," he broke in. "The soon coming!"

David laughed ruefully. His diagnosis was confirmed, and he was profoundly sorry for the big, handsome fellow before him. To argue with a crazy man was useless. In all probability Peter had lost his sense of proportion in Hunland.

"Well, maybe you're right, Pete," he said soothingly. "I don't know. We'll have to wait and see, eh?"

Kingsland was glad David had misunderstood him, though he wasn't aware why the doctor had changed his attitude so quickly.

"You'll see him when the time comes," he agreed smiling. "The eyes of the world will be opened then."

But it wasn't a heavenly being Peter pictured stepping into the royal place of King of the World, but a military figure, with broad mustaches and eagle eyes, beside whom was the gracious lady who had allowed him to kiss her hand and bend his red head in obeisance before her. He didn't mention this to David nor did he tell him of the society he was interested in.

The doctor was somewhat embarrassed. He had here another patient cursed with a disease more serious than Senator Kingsland's.

"When we break the back of this confounded scrap" he began—

"Oh! the war'll be ended before long," Peter interposed quickly. "And after it's over, I'll take Ted abroad. He needs a change, and he'll have fine opportunities over there."

David glared at the speaker. Pete might be crazy, but he certainly had the faculty of saying and suggesting mighty disagreeable things.

"I suppose you mean the Prussians are going to win it, eh?" he snorted. "That they'll have a lot of honor and glory out of the bloody mess they've made? . . . But they won't, not by a damned sight, Pete! . . . All the glory and honor Mr. Kaiser'll get is a good, hot place in hell!"

## CHAPTER XXVII

### "I Love You So!"

UPSTAIRS in the room where Roderick Kingsland lay, Judy Ketchel was seated in a large armchair, her slender, brown arm propped under her drooping head. Doctor Carmen had said when he left her, she must be very quiet, and she was doing her best to obey his orders. Her blue eyes, darkly circled from fatigue, were fixed on Senator Kingsland's face. He looked so worn, so ill, and there was nothing now she could do but sit beside him still as a mouse.

Slowly the man's weary lids lifted, and his eyes, unnaturally bright, shone up at her.

Judy smiled at him as she would have smiled at Denny.

"Is there anybody here, child?" whispered Kingsland.

She leaned over the bed.

"Nobody but me," she answered. "Doc Carmen's gone downstairs, but he said you must sleep. Can't you, if you try awful hard?"

"No matter about Dave," Kingsland groaned, "I want to talk to you alone. . . . Sit down beside me!"

Gingerly, Judy sat on the edge of the bed.

"Go ahead!" she said, "an' I'll listen if you'll take a good snooze afterwards."

"I'll try," promised Kingsland.

Judy waited patiently for him to speak. The old man was looking at her eagerly, and under the steady inspection, she flushed.

"I—I wanted to ask if you loved me a little," he gasped.

Dancing gleams brought out a deeper purple in the girl's eyes, and her radiating smile seemed to quicken the blood in Kingsland's veins.

"Sure I love you lots," breathed Judy. "Why! You're as good awake as grandpap is when he's dreamin'."

A deep sigh, almost a sob, interrupted the sick man's

short breaths. Then his gaze strayed over her head only to encounter Ricardo's sardonic glare. There was no purple in the ghost-boy's blue eyes, only that imperative demand. Kingsland could win his own freedom by satisfying his phantom tormentor, but the same action would kill Judy's love and disinherit Peter, his wonderful Peter! Quickly the Senator sought in the girl's tender gaze the affection he craved. He knew there was really no choice left him, yet he wanted her sympathy a little while longer.

"I can't imagine how you dared to do what you did today," he said, "the horse, I mean, Judy."

"I'd do a hull lot more'n that for you," she rejoined, fondling the hand she'd taken in hers. "Grandpap Ketchel calls me a barn cat, an' I guess I am all right!"

Kingsland's pulses were beating furiously.

"You'll stay with me," he begged, "stay a while longer."

"That I will," Judy assured him. "I'll stay 'til you're sick of seein' me 'bout. . . . Now, take a nap."

"Not yet," objected Kingsland, "not yet! I want to ask you something."

Judy lowered her head, and a little ear with a yellow curl twisted around it came close to the man's shaking lips.

"Have you a friend you can depend on?" he questioned. "I mean one who'd keep a secret?"

Judy lifted her head and looked at him. She thought a moment.

"I got two friends. . . . There's Doc Carmen! You couldn't drag a word from him with a rope longer'n from here to Rogues' Harbor."

"No, not Dave," said Kingsland.

"Then there's only Mrs. Lessington," she concluded after another moment's cogitation. "She'd do anything for me. She lives in the haunted house near McKinney's."

Kingsland went deathly white, and his breath came in labored gasps. He felt as if every one would be his last.

"Haunted," he echoed. "May God pity her! But—you're positive you can trust her? . . . She'd keep something for you if you asked her?"

Judy remembered Denny.

"Surest thing you know," she nodded. "There ain't



any one better'n her. . . . Why, mister, I took to her what I liked best in all the world, an' she ain't never spieled a word about it."

Kingsland moved a little.

"I'm glad you've got such a friend, dear child," he said. "Put your hand underneath the mattress, and—and you'll find a package. . . . It's under—at the top. . . . Get it!"

Quickly Judy slipped her hand under the soft bedding, and her fingers came in contact with a thick envelope. She held up the package, sealed with splotches of wax.

"Is this it?" she asked.

"Yes," replied Kingsland. "Tell your friend to keep it—until——"

"'Til you want it again, eh?" queried Judy.

"Until I'm dead," sighed Kingsland. "You must'nt tell my son, nor Teddy, nor any one. . . . I have your promise, little Judy?"

Tears were blinding the girl's eyes.

"Oh! I'll promise anything," she said brokenly, "if you'll only not talk of dyin'. Yes, yes, I'll take it to her, an' I won't even tell her you gave it to me."

"Take it today," came in a whisper. "Haven't you any place to put it?"

Judy slipped the package into the front of her overhanging blouse.

"There!" she exclaimed. "It's safe! . . . Say, go to sleep, won't you? . . . Doc Carmen'd be mad if he heard you talkin' so much, an' never let me come again."

Kingsland closed his eyes.

"I can't sleep," he complained. "Before you go home, dear child, tell David I want him."

Judy tiptoed noiselessly downstairs. She was dreadfully frightened. Somewhere in the vast house was Teddy's father, the tall man who had offered her money. She didn't want to see him, nor his haughty sister either. The library door stood ajar, and she could plainly hear David Carmen speaking. The sound gave her courage to knock timidly. Some one bade her enter, and she slipped into the room but stopped and threw her eyes around. In front of her sat the man with the red hair. He frowned

at her, but she recalled her errand and looked at the doctor.

"He wants you upstairs, mister Dave," she said, throwing a pointed thumb upward, "an' I got to go now."

Hearing a sound behind her, she turned squarely. Theodore Kingsland was gazing at her with troubled eyes, and Judy smiled at him.

All at once she lost the fear of Peter that had pervaded her on leaving Senator Kingsland.

"You're going with me, Judy," Teddy told her, and she wondered why he didn't smile.

Peter rose quietly and advanced, a suave expression on his handsome face. He looked first at his son and then at the girl.

"Benson can drive Miss Ketchel home, Ted," he intervened. "I'll call him."

Teddy spread his feet wide apart, determination written on every line of his features.

"Benson can't drive her home, pater," he replied doggedly. "I brought her, and I'm going to take her back."

Judy's blue eyes turned from father to son. Intuitively, she felt the big man didn't like her and didn't want Teddy to be with her. Innate pride surged suddenly within her.

"Nobody needn't bother with me," she retorted. "I got two legs, an' I can walk to Rogues' Harbor, an' I'm goin' to—see?"

An exclamation from Teddy drew her angry, blue eyes to him. He looked so hurt, so downcast, that instantly her heart softened.

"I'm sorry I said that!" she apologized. "I guess as long as you fetched me you can take me along back."

The violent stroke of a match's head sent every eye to Peter. He was standing very straight as he held a flame to his cigarette, and when he raised his eyes, Judy noticed they were almost black, and the lids were drawn down at the corners.

"I expressed a wish, Theodore," said Peter, stiltedly, "for Benson to drive this—this young lady to her home."

Teddy didn't move from Judy's side. His own gaze grew dark in an uprising, passionate decision. For a single instant, he eyed his father.

"And I expressed a wish, dad," he repeated, throwing up his head, "to take her back." Then he turned to Judy. "Come!" was all he said to her, but over his shoulder he threw at the rigid Peter, "I won't be gone long, pater."

There was a silence in the library after Judy and Teddy had gone. Peter resembled a thunder-cloud, and David Carmen felt ill at ease. . . .

"They're only kids, Pete," he observed lamely.

"Theodore's a fool," grated Peter, "a perfect fool."

"But youth will be youth," laughed David. "So long, Pete."

But he hadn't gone quick enough to miss the smothered oath that came from Peter Kingsland's lips. As he went slowly upstairs, the doctor's brow wrinkled, and he wondered what the man he'd just left really was—If he were mad on religion, or—or—a hypocrite.

\* \* \* \*

Meantime Teddy had gravely helped Judy into the run-about and was directing the machine to the highway.

"I got to stop at—at the House of Mystery," said Judy, timidly. "I won't be gone more'n a minute."

"Very well," but Teddy's voice was so different from its usual tone, Judy took a shy glance at his frowning face, trying to understand why he should have changed so. Then she brightened a little. Of course, he felt worried about his grandfather. When anybody one loves is sick, it is hard to smile and be happy. Didn't she know? Hadn't she felt just that way about Denny?

"I'm awfully sorry about your—your granddaddy bein' so sick," she got out with effort.

"He'd have been dead if you hadn't had nerve," said the boy in the same impersonal tone.

Judy compressed her lips. Her sympathy hadn't dispelled the gloom which had descended over Teddy like a cloud.

"Doc Carmen'll get him well," she broke out. "I guess he could bring up a dead man if he tried awful hard."

Teddy gripped at the motor wheel impatiently.

"Oh, graddy'll get well." He spoke quite indifferently.

Judy glanced at him again, then allowed her eyes to rest on her hands in her lap. If he weren't worried about Senator Kingsland—Oh, now she knew. He was sorry to have offended his wonderful father.

"An' your daddy'll forgive you for fetchin' me back," she offered, after a while.

Still Theodore's moody, brown eyes kept straight forward on the road ahead.

"The pater ought to realize I'm a man," he growled. "I'm as big as he is—almost." He straightened his shoulders but didn't look at her.

"You're lots better lookin'," murmured Judy with finality in her tones.

Then because he didn't reply to this she remained very quiet. There was nothing more to say. The twilight was falling over the lake there in the distance, and under any other conditions, she would have loved to study the darkening water with the shadows falling so swiftly upon it, but she felt helpless with the boy she loved so unhappy beside her. Hadn't she said all she could? She'd spoken of his father, of his grandfather, and Judy couldn't think of any one else Teddy knew. She touched the front of her blouse where the thick package of letters rested. She wasn't the slightest bit curious to know what they contained. She was startled out of her reverie by Teddy drawing up to the side of the road and stopping his car with a squeaking brake.

"I want to talk to you," he rapped out.

"Oh," was all Judy could say.

Teddy turned and looked at her, his brows still drawn down into a frown.

"Now, tell me about that man," he commanded almost roughly.

"What man?" she inquired.

"Oh, you know!" Teddy said irritably. "The fellow I licked down at the Point. I wish now I'd licked him good."

Judy Ketchel stared at the frowning speaker. For a moment, she couldn't recollect anything because Teddy's

dark face and blazing eyes were very close to hers. So she drew back a little into the corner of the seat.

"Oh, you mean Sliver Jim?" she began. "Oh! Glory me, there ain't nothin' to tell about him!"

"Nevertheless, tell me," responded Teddy, savagely. "Say, if you don't explain something about him today, I'm going to look him up and give him another licking! . . . One he won't forget this time, you bet!"

A serious expression crossed Judy's face. If he did that she didn't know what would happen.

"I'd ruther you wouldn't," she remonstrated.

Teddy shook his great shoulders impatiently.

"I don't care if you do," he snapped. "Tomorrow he'll get what's coming to him."

The eyes of Judy's soul had pierced through Teddy's mood. He didn't like Sliver Jim! She didn't either, for that matter, but to beat him up would upset all she was trying to do.

"Sliver ain't the worst in the world, though he's pretty bad," she explained. Then she checked herself, looked into the red-brown demanding eyes, and went on passionately, "Sliver'll make an awful good pappy, now honest to God, won't he?"

Judy Ketchel knew nothing of false modesty, but she did know that in her own wild world, the little birds chose their mates, and after a while a nest was filled with small, greedy mouths. Olive had chosen her mate too, and he was Sliver Jim. With this in her mind she said,

"Sliver's pretty thin and yellow lookin', but he's got enough muscles to get bread for babies when he's a pappy, huh?"

Teddy Kingsland fell back against the seat of the car.

"My God, how awful," he stammered.

Slowly Judy hitched over the inches between them.

"Sliver ain't very nice," she told him, "but when a thing's so, it's so, that's all."

Teddy gazed at her, a revolution going on within him. A dreadful hurt stretched even to his toes. And he'd loved her so, and she adored the gawk he'd beaten with his fists. He shuddered from head to foot as his castles, built in



his delightful day-dreams, tumbled in pieces about him. Well! Life was over for him. Never again would he care to see another woman! Never so long as he lived! He'd go to war and get killed just as soon as he could. He wanted to die. He wiped his face with his handkerchief and groaned.

By a sudden movement, Judy's face was close to his, but Teddy, thinking of what she had said, crushed his big body farther back into the corner. She touched his arm.

"Don't!" he cried. "I can't stand it!"

"Ain't a thing so, if 'tis so?" demanded Judy.

"Yes," moaned Teddy, "but—but—oh, dearest, I love you so!"

This was like sweet music to Judy's ears. She smiled broadly, but there was still that terrible expression on his face, and he had just told her he loved her. Well, she loved him too, so, knowing no better, she reached forth again and touched him. Teddy faced her in intense agitation. Her eyes held that adorable purple, and he saw while the blood in his veins smartly rapped at his pulses, that dimples were showing themselves in her cheeks. Because he loved her and she loved him, Judy still kept her hand on his arm.

Teddy noted two yellow curls had fallen across her shoulder, and her warm breath came against his face. Maddened beyond endurance, he pushed her fingers from his sleeve. He was trying his best to hate her.

"Don't do that!" he said harshly. "Don't touch me! . . . Say, what kind of a girl are you?"

Judy made a negative gesture with her head, and a look of wonder chased away her smiles.

"I dunno," she whispered. "I'm just Judy, I guess. But—but—didn't you say you—you loved me?"

Teddy braced himself. Of course he'd said he loved her. Hadn't he told her so over and over.

"I do," he vowed. "I do love you, and you know it, but here you sit and tell me that—that you love some one else."

Now it was Judy's turn to straighten up. Quite deliberately, she arranged her curls so they hung straight down her back, and she gathered in a deep breath.



"That's a lie," she let out, "an awful lie. I never said I loved anybody but you."

Teddy wanted to fight. He was just jealous that was all, and another thing he didn't understand.

"If you didn't say it out plainly in so many words, you inferred it," he cried. "And such an inference!"

Judy thought a moment. She was endeavoring to sort out all the long words, Teddy was using. She only knew she loved him, and that he was unhappy. Then it suddenly flashed through her mind what he meant.

"You were thinkin' I liked Sliver?" she quavered.

"You do," said Teddy, dully. "You made such an awful statement just now."

They were silent a moment.

"You mean," began Judy, "what I said about Sliver makin' a good——"

"Don't say it over," interrupted Teddy, frantically. "Don't, it kills me."

Then fully did Judy Ketchel realize what ailed Teddy Kingsland. The dimples came back, and two rows of teeth displayed themselves through curved red lips.

"Oh! Now I see what you mean," she sighed, still smiling. "You thought 'cause I said that about Sliver that I liked him. Well, I don't! . . . I say I don't! . . . I never have an' I never will! Sliver won't be pappy to none of my babies."

Heavenly music! That's what the crude statement was to Theodore Kingsland. Primeval passion gripped at him, and the man in him rose up to meet the woman in her. Judy couldn't have said anything that would have brought him out of his agony more certainly. He stretched out his arm and snatched her to him.

"It's like this," Judy took up. "While I can't tell anything just now, I don't want you to beat Sliver Jim any more!"

Her two arms went about the boy's neck, and her face suffused with crimson. "I can tell this, though," she hurried on. "Mebbe sometime I'll ask you to kick Sliver to pieces. But not yet. . . . I love you heaps an' heaps!"

She said it naturally, honestly, and Teddy believing her

didn't need any more assurances. How heavenly the world seemed, and he didn't want to die at all now. He wanted to live, to love and be loved.

"Kiss me, sweet," he breathed.

And as one of her little birdies might have caressed her chosen one, so Judy kissed Teddy with all the warmth of her blossoming womanhood.

For a long time, they talked. Teddy told her he was going to war, and that when he came back, they'd get married. It was Judy who suddenly thought of the social difference between them.

"I'd have to be learned a lot before then," she said gravely, bobbing her head. "I'll get books an' study so much that when you get back from lickin' the Germans you won't know me."

"Little moonlight girl," whispered Teddy. "You are my girl, aren't you, Judy?"

"Yes," came in a passionate breath.

"And I'm all your boy. You—you couldn't love anyone but me?"

"No," said Judy, dreamily. "I'll be your girl forever and ever."

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### A GAME OF MAKING MUD PIES

AFTER Peter Kingsland was left alone, he crossed and recrossed the library in a mood difficult to describe. He was furious with Theodore, with his father, and even with David Carmen. He could imagine Sarah's sneering laugh and taunting, "I told you so," when she learned of Teddy's defiance. He had been so sure of Ted, so perfectly satisfied his influence with the boy would be paramount, and it would have been too if it hadn't been for that Ketchel girl.

Sarah Kingsland was reclining on a divan, her eyes swollen with weeping, when Peter walked into her room.

"I wish I'd never come back here," was how she greeted him. "I wish I'd stayed in New York with Florence."

If wishing would have done any good, Peter could have made some wishes himself. As it was he merely shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't suppose there's anything to keep you from going back if you want to," he grunted. "Father evidently doesn't need either one of us, and I suppose this confounded parade business will keep him laid up for weeks."

Sarah snuffed at her smelling salts.

"A lot you care," she whimpered, during the process.

Peter turned on her.

"But I do care," he answered. "I've got to have money, and quick too!" He strode up and down the room once or twice. "Gott im Himmel! What am I going to do?"

Sarah propped herself on her elbow.

"Light me a cigarette, Pete," she sniffled. "What's happened? . . . You're as nervous as a cat."

When he handed his sister the cigarette, Peter related angrily, amidst a profusion of Teutonic oaths, the events that had just passed.

"Father had Dave Carmen turn us out purposely so he

could send for that girl," he went on, "and Master Teddy is completely betwitched by her."

Sarah opened her mouth, blew out some smoke and stared at her brother.

"Of course, I'll stop that at any cost," Peter threatened. "Why, she's a granddaughter of the very man Stein told me to go and see. . . . Ketchel!" He lowered his voice and murmured, "He's a Citizen."

"And probably like all the rest of the precious gang a money grabber," commented Sarah. "You needn't expect anything from him! The old man'll be tickled pink to catch a Kingsland for his granddaughter."

An ever ready oath slipped from between Peter's teeth.

"Himmel, woman, you're always croaking!" he said in an ugly tone. "Well, I'm going out to hunt up Meggs. . . . If Teddy comes back tell him I want to see him before he goes to bed."

\* \* \* \* \*

Peter found John Meggs at the address given him by Stein, and the very sight of him set Peter's nerves on edge. Lengthwise of Meggs' face, from his temple to his chin, ran a hideous, flame-colored scar. Peter remembered that in Germany marks like this one were but evidences of honorable association, but in the United States—Well, the fellow looked like a criminal! He threw the suggestion aside and gave the society's grip to the stooped-shouldered man awaiting recognition.

"Sit down!" Meggs invited, "and smoke if you like."

Peter offered his companion a cigarette, and lighted one himself.

"I tried to give you a better home-coming, Herr Kingsland," the other began, "but somehow we slipped a cog."

Under his heavy brows, Peter looked interrogatively at the speaker.

"Then Stein wired you I was coming?" he asked.

The ugly scar worked up and down, and Peter, unable to bear the sight of it, dropped his eyes to the glowing end of his cigarette while he waited for an answer.

"Certainly!" said Meggs. "And your father's war activities decided the Society to make it possible for you to step into his shoes."

Peter slowly lifted his head and stared hard at the other man. Then, seemingly, he comprehended, for a death-white overspread his face. He leaned forward shaking.

"Then I understand, Meggs, that something was done to my father's horse—that the dreadful affair today was planned?"

"By the Citizens," interposed Meggs. "Here's a letter from Stein. He perfectly approved of it. . . . Your father has been altogether too generous to the wrong cause. You see, Klubert says, 'Washington is as taut as a wire, and we've got to work quick.' Enthusiasm is growing everywhere."

Like one dazed, Peter sat motionless for a long while. His brain seemed to be keeping time to that horrible, working scar. That his father's exposure to death had been deliberately designed by his confrères had never for one single instant occurred to him. He felt nauseated, almost ill. The hideous thing he had promised to help do to others had lifted its gruesome form within the very gates of Kingsland Court, itself.

He had taken Stein's letter in his hand and was making a pretense of reading it, but every word joined its neighbor until each line became but a black smudge across the paper. When he looked up, Meggs bent suddenly forward, and as suddenly, Peter drew backward.

"You see what Stein says?" asked Meggs, a smile crossing his thick red lips.

The paper rustled in Peter's hand. No, he hadn't read a word of the letter. His mind was on a great, snorting, black horse, and a yellow-haired girl, and above these, his father's ghastly countenance.

"You'll notice," Meggs ran on, stretching forth a hand and touching the letter, "Stein says, 'It'll take millions to get the stuff to blow up munition factories and cripple the ships the government is preparing.'"

"Gott!" shuddered Peter.

The laugh that distorted Meggs' face was more horrid

because of the jagged mark that worked itself to a deep crimson in the midst of the man's mirth.

"Little chicken hearted, eh, Kingsland?" he queried.

Peter shook his head.

"No," he muttered, "but it sounds devilish as you put it."

"So 'tis devilish," nodded Meggs, "but not more so than the way the Allies are treating the Fatherland. The whole of the United States, Canada, France, and England too are not worth one foot of my beautiful, Hanoverian country."

His voice hoarsened as he spoke, and his face became livid, leaving the scar a brilliant slash across the greyness of his cheek. It was a big comparison, he'd made, too big for Peter to admit its truth.

"Next week we've got to take a firm hold of things," Meggs took up. "I've fixed a meeting place for the Citizens under Ithaca Falls, in the gorge of Fall Creek near the old paper mills. There's quite a large chamber back of the falling water. You know about where I mean?" The speaker paused, while the other man by a nod and gesture of his hand gave an affirmative answer. "And now, Kingsland, I want you to listen to me. . . . Do you know that your father is actually interested in the Chain factory here in Ithaca which is sending hundreds of tons of chains to France for those damned tanks they're using? . . . Did you know it?"

Sick at heart, Peter shook his head.

"My father owns stock in most enterprises in Tompkins County," he excused lamely.

"But can't you stop him?" Meggs demanded. "The papers say he's giving heavily to the Red Cross and the Belgian funds too!"

"I guess that's true," conceded Peter. "My father is very much of an American. He always has been!"

"Stop it," snapped Meggs.

A sullen, obstinate expression settled on Peter's face.

"How can I?" he questioned. "My father attends to his own affairs, and I can only hand over what money he lets me have for you fellows to work with."



Again Meggs spent several seconds looking at Peter.

"You've forgotten, Herr Kingsland, the Citizens' oath, haven't you? 'I swear, by the Almighty God, to remove any man from the earth!'" he quoted.

Peter bounded up, dropping Stein's letter on the floor.

"God," he cried. "Don't finish it, Meggs! . . . He's my father! You've got to remember that!"

Meggs got to his feet also and tried to straighten his stooped shoulders.

"Which if you should repeat in Berlin would raise a smile," he replied impressively. "There is but one father, one ruler in this world, Kingsland." He touched his forehead, bent his knee and went on, "His Majesty, Wilhelm of Germany!"

Peter's emotions caused him to forget to make obeisance at the mention of the Kaiser, and the other man didn't remark on it. Instead, he continued,

"I noticed the afternoon papers didn't speak of your father's miraculous escape."

Peter's big body fell back into his chair, and slowly Meggs sat also.

"No! Doctor Carmen arranged with the editors to omit mention of it," explained Peter, his voice not sounding natural to his own ears.

"And the girl?" Meggs questioned. "You know who she is?"

"Yes! She's—she's Ketchel's granddaughter, Herman Ketchel from Rogues' Harbor."

A touch of spite crept into Peter's voice when he made this statement.

"Rather her than any one else," Meggs answered vindictively. "She can be attended to. She won't interfere with the Society's plans again!"

This interested Peter.

"How do you know?" he inquired.

"I've promised her to Jim Shuckies," Meggs explained. "He's a German from up Lansing way and has taken a fancy to Ketchel's granddaughter. From what I know of him he'll take the pep out of her."

Peter's heart had once more begun to beat normally.

"Tell me about this man, Shuckies," he requested. "From what you say I shouldn't think him a very savory fellow."

"Perhaps not!" grinned Meggs. "No, he's not one you'd pick out as a chum, but he's a good German and ready to work when we want him. . . . Now, Herr Kingsland—what—I mean, I'd like a little money tonight."

Peter shook his shoulders impatiently.

"I can't get any money for a few days," he countered. "The doctor's ordered my father extreme quiet."

Meggs coughed, thought a moment, then looked straight at Peter.

"Just how soon can you get it," he demanded. "You understand, Herr Kingsland, we can't wait long. Stein and I've run in debt on your promises."

Just then Peter felt that he didn't care whether they had or not.

"You'll have to do like I will—wait a while," he returned coldly. "I can't see anything else to do."

Meggs leaned forward, an ominous expression drawing his brows together.

"I can," he replied hoarsely. "You're your father's natural heir, you and your—sister?"

Peter flushed.

"Yes, of course! But that has nothing to do with it—has it?"

He stammered out the last half of the sentence for Meggs' head shooting toward him like a searching turtle's filled him with loathing.

"Has it?" he repeated sharply.

"It certainly has!" growled Meggs. "It most certainly has! If you can't serve your master with your father—ahem—on the earth, then get rid of him! 'I swear, by the Almighty——' "

"Stop," cried Peter, jumping up. "You'll drive me mad with that talk."

Meggs centered his eyes on the speaker, and the scar on his cheek looked like the undulations of a small, blood-red snake. He got up, a heavy scowl only adding to the hideousness of his face.

"What do you think this is, Kingsland?" he gritted, "a game of making mud pies? Hide and go seek, perhaps?"

Peter shook his head. His tongue refused to utter a syllable. For several seconds the men eyed each other in nervous silence.

"Herr Kingsland," broke forth Meggs, "didn't you give the Kaiser your word that you'd furnish the money to destroy the munition factories and keep the ships from sailing to France?"

"Yes," admitted Peter, "but—but——"

"Did you whine, then, my dear sir, and say 'If my papa will give me five cents for a lollipop, I'll do it?'" Meggs' voice was terrible in its mockery. "And you took an oath over his Majesty's all powerful hand, didn't you?"

"Yes," whispered Peter.

A sneer arched Meggs' heavy red lips.

"Then, see that you live up to it, sir," he said. "It wouldn't make very good reading in Prussia's capital that you had slumped on your promises."

Peter look round helplessly. He felt like a stag at bay with the hounds gnawing at his very heels.

"Of course, I'll not do that, Meggs," he temporised. "I'll go back now, but will see you in a day or two."

## CHAPTER XXIX

### GERMAN PHILOSOPHY

ON his way to Kingsland Court, Peter felt as if the very earth—the earth of peaceful Ithaca, would suddenly open and swallow him up. In the past few hours, it had been driven home with powerful blows just what a mess he had gotten himself into. He saw no limit to the demands which would be made upon him, and more than that he saw no immediate way of meeting those same demands.

When he entered the library, Theodore laid down his book, glanced up, and Peter smiled at him.

"I'm glad to find you here, son," he said with extreme affability.

Teddy's face remained very grave.

"Aunt Sarah said you wanted to see me, pater, so I waited up," he explained.

"And what more natural than that I should want to talk to my boy after all these years, Ted?" Peter laughed. "I've scarcely had a chance to get a word in edgewise with you since I came home."

"Graddy's accident canned that," muttered Teddy.

Peter dropped into a chair.

"And you going away just when I wanted you, my dear," he put in quickly.

This was a rebuke Theodore realized.

"That was natural too, pater," he answered with a touch of impatience in his tones. "I told you I was going to marry Judy Ketchel——" He checked himself, then went on resolutely, "Pater, I want to enlist. . . . I just can't stand it this way. I only waited until you came home because graddy wanted me to."

Peter braced himself. It was difficult for him to meet the red-brown eyes watching him so steadily. He'd have to shade and color his statements, and he hated the task,

but to settle the matter once and for all would make one bother the less, though. The depths of his affection for the youngster made him timid about submitting his sophistries to his direct and simple honesty. However, he forced himself to admit that the end justified the means. For a moment he played with a vivid picture of German honors showered on that beloved, young head, and heard Theodore's appreciative words of gratitude. He drew his chair nearer the window and deliberately selected a cigarette.

"Smoke, Ted?" he asked at length.

"No thanks, pater. I don't like it!"

There was no trace of the perturbation Peter felt on his placid countenance as he turned toward his son.

"So you want to enlist," he said indulgently, after sending out several rings of smoke.

"Yes, a fellow doesn't want to be a slacker," answered Teddy.

"It takes courage to stand up for the right when one's in the minority," responded Peter, almost carelessly.

"Courage?" repeated Teddy. "What do you mean by that, Pete?"

Then he flushed to the roots of his hair, and his father laughed.

"I like you to call me 'Pete,' son, dear! It's chummy."

"It might sound disrespectful to some folks," hesitated the boy. "I didn't mean it that way, you know, but you see everybody calls you 'Pete,' and it slipped out somehow."

"Don't apologize, Ted, I love it. You and I ought to be pals. Come on out on the verandah. It's cooler, and we'll talk this thing out."

When they were seated outside in the soft light of the electric porch lamp, Teddy's impatience broke out again.

"Five fellows from my 'frat' are leaving for Newport tonight," he began. "And hundreds of the fellows've gone."

Peter studied the end of his cigarette.

"Teddy," he remarked, apparently apropos of nothing in particular, "I'm some older than you, and I've seen a good deal more of the world than you have."

The boy couldn't dispute this, although he thought he recognized it as an introduction to something disagreeable.

"Yes?" he assented.

"And I've noticed," the older man let fall meditatively, "that few folks do their own thinking."

Teddy was a little bewildered by this conclusion for he couldn't see its bearing exactly. He supposed his father was right, though he hadn't considered it himself.

"Yes?" he replied in a questioning tone.

"Now, take your own case, for instance, Ted," Peter philosophised. "You say, 'hundreds of the fellows have gone,' as if that was a sufficient reason why you should."

Theodore did think that a good reason and calculated to strengthen his position by adding,

"And graddy and Judy Ketchel, and everybody thinks it's right for me to go. . . . They can't all be wrong."

"Wait, Teddy, just a moment," countered Peter. "You'll have to admit it's possible they're all wrong. . . . It is possible, isn't it?"

The boy thought soberly a moment and then nodded his head.

"Yes, I suppose it might be possible," he admitted, "but not very probable, I should say."

"What everybody believes," Peter followed up his advantage, "is probably true, eh?" Without awaiting an answer to his question, the speaker persisted, "Tell me, Theodore, there was a time when pretty much everybody thought it right to burn the followers of Christ at the stake, were they right, eh?"

The boy wriggled uncomfortably in his chair.

"No, but that's different," he protested. "We're fighting for our country and liberty and democracy."

Peter held up his hand.

"Have you tried to measure country, liberty and democracy by Christ's standard, son?" he continued, and Teddy looked uncertain and embarrassed.

"Now, let's see," his father summed up. "The United States says 'It's right for you to fight?' So! Well, Jesus says, 'Love one another,' doesn't He?"



Teddy had to admit this, but felt there was something wrong somewhere.

"But the Germans 're such brutes, pater!" he broke out. "They've done such cruel, wicked things! . . . What're you going to do? Let 'em walk all over the United States?"

Peter confidently expected that was just what was going to happen, and he intended too, his son and himself should walk with the conquerors rather than grovel in the dust with the conquered, but he didn't think it wise to say so.

"Let me ask you a question, son," he said. "You think hate and greed moved the Germans to start the war. You said so in your letters to me, didn't you?"

Teddy was beginning to be suspicious of his father's questions, but there was no answer but an assent possible to this one.

"Yes, and it's pretty well known they did too," he replied.

"Well, suppose you start hating them with all your might, what have you done?" He paused, leaned forward waiting for the boy's reply, but, hearing none, continued, "Anything more than increased the total amount of hate?" The speaker gazed earnestly into the boy's face. "Is that a good thing, son? Will hate end war or tend to continue it?"

Peter dropped back in his chair and smoked placidly while Teddy was mulling this over in his mind.

"But, pater, I don't hate the Germans, exactly," he objected finally, "only what they do."

"And so," Peter interposed quickly, "you want to go over there and do the same kind of thing, eh?"

"Surest thing, because you've got to meet force with force, or let the other fellow do what's he's a mind to with you."

"That's the human theory, certainly," conceded Peter. "Men have tried that way for a long time. They haven't ended wars and injustice, have they, Ted?"

Again the boy felt there was but one answer possible. He knew peace was very desirable, so desirable he was willing to fight for it.

"God's way is different," Peter insisted suavely. "Now, admit, son dear, that I've persuaded you my ideas are right."

"But, pater," was the impetuous retort, "how 're you going to love the Germans. They'd shoot you while you were doing it!"

It would have been the pleasantest task in the world for Peter to have explained how easy it was to love Germany and the Germans, and he longed to refute his son's charges against them, but thought it was wiser to follow the line of argument he had chosen, so he assumed an air of tolerance he didn't feel.

"What's the idea, Ted? Do you imagine the Germans 're a kind of superhuman devils or what? They're men, just like you and I, aren't they?"

Teddy hesitated then blurted,

"I'd call 'em anything but men, pater, that's sure. They've run amuck, and they've got to be licked, and—and—I want to help do it, so I do."

Staggered at his son's emphatic avowal, Peter smoked in sober silence for a few minutes. He threw away the butt of a cigarette and took out his case from which he extracted another. Truly he had been away from this dear lad too long.

"But you and I, my dear son," he continued presently, "have a duty here at home, and an opportunity, too. We can work for the brotherhood of man."

A dissatisfied look spread over Teddy's face, and his father noted it.

"It's a little hard for you to give up the idea of going into the service, I know," he went on with his argument again, "but you'll find a splendid chance for effective work in a society I belong to." Teddy's interest revived. "I'm hoping you'll take hold and help me."

Help his father! He could think of nothing more delightful!

"What society's that, Pete?" he inquired quickly. "I'll be glad to do anything I can."

In spite of his disappointment, the boy made his voice cordial and convincing, and Peter thrilled to hear it.

"I don't know as I should have said anything about it just yet, Teddy," he replied. "It's tentative in Ithaca yet, but if you'll promise not to say anything——"

"Of course, I won't mention it," Teddy interrupted, "if you don't want me to."

"Don't forget, then, I have your promise."

"Sure, Pete, I'll remember."

"It's called the 'Citizens of the World,'" Peter explained in a low voice. "It's made up of men who are trying to make Christ's teachings of love and brotherhood actually active in their own lives and thus to influence the thought of the world and win a peace that will be real and permanent."

It sounded visionary to Theodore, but he felt his father wasn't any half-baked theorist and assumed there must be something about it, he didn't understand.

"Citizens of the World?" he repeated. "Just what does that mean?"

"Just what I've said," responded his father, "every man at peace with every other man, and each one working for the welfare of all."

"And have no personal country?" asked Teddy.

"The whole world would be our country," asserted Peter.

The boy's mind swept the world in review, noting its many languages, nationalities, its millions of people, and their loves and hates, little and big.

"But, Pete," he objected, "there's so many ways of living and thinking. You can't work them all into one mold, can you?"

Peter smiled under cover of his cigarette smoke. He had a very clear idea of the strong hand that would bend the will of inferior peoples to its own purposes, but Teddy wasn't ready for that teaching yet.

"A little leaven, leaveneth the whole lump," he quoted glibly. "That's the wonder of genuine Christianity, Teddy. It's positive, affirmative and absolutely irresistible."

Peter rose from his chair and Teddy stood up too.

"You haven't told me yet what you want me to do, pater," said Teddy.

"I want you to do this, son! . . . Study your Bible!

... Think over what I've said to you, and when we get a little further along and need you, I'll let you know."

Teddy felt as if he had been dismissed, and he was glad to go. He lingered a moment to watch an automobile searchlight on the Trumansburg road glide along the side of the hill.

"I'm sorry you won't let me enlist, pater," he said presently, "but I'll think it over and see if I can see it your way." He turned and went toward the door, and then came back a step or two. "Didn't Jesus say something about giving to him that asketh?"

Wondering what was coming, Peter nodded.

"Well," continued the boy, a mischievous light flickering in the red-brown eyes, "in my opinion, Germany has asked the United States for a damn good licking, and I'd like to help give it to 'em."

## CHAPTER XXX

### RESULTS COUNT IN THE END

It was a full week after Peter Kingsland's return to Ithaca before Doctor Carmen permitted him to see his father. In addition to the horror of idle waiting, he had been subjected to daily prods from Stein and Meggs, and he had been further humiliated by seeing Teddy escort Judy Ketchel every day to the sick room, the portals of which were closed to him. The only outlet for his irritation was Sarah, and the tears and reproaches with which she replied to his curses, were additional sources of annoyance.

The morning Peter came in to see his father, Senator Kingsland was bolstered up in a chair, under the supervision of a young woman in a white cap and apron. The old man looked very weak and ill, and for a moment Peter's heart softened with sympathy. By the time the greetings were over and the nurse had left them alone, he was feeling again the burden of his gigantic task, and went directly to the point.

"Father," he began, "I need some money, and Carmen wouldn't let me speak to you about it before."

"I'm sorry, son," the Senator tried to apologize. "Where's my check book? . . . I'll fix it now. . . . How much do you want?"

Peter crossed his legs and leaned back easily.

"It's quite a lot," he remarked. "I won't bother you with the details now, but when you're better, we'll talk it over."

"How much?" the sick man broke in impatiently. "It doesn't matter to me how you use it. . . . How much?"

The temptation to answer, "All you've got," assailed Peter so strongly that he smiled to himself. His own necessities were infinite, and the only limit to his demands was the amount he thought his father would stand.

"I warned you, pater," he said and smiled his brilliant, dazzling smile, "I need a lot."

"How much?" the old man asked again, but this time, warmed by his love for his wonderful son, his tone was indulgent.

"Well," Peter still hesitated, but finally blurted out, "A half a million dollars."

Senator Kingsland stared at his son blankly.

"A half a million dollars," he echoed. "Have you gone mad, Peter?"

The speaker shifted his glance for one second merely to the ghost-boy at the fireplace. Then because he could not tolerate the blazing blue eyes, his gaze came back to his son.

"You're mad, aren't you?" he repeated dully.

"Certainly not," returned Peter. "I'd be glad to tell you my plans if you're able to listen, father. You've been doing so much, but now I'm home, I want to do something too!"

Senator Kingsland experienced a feeling of genuine relief. His sickness wouldn't be such a serious matter if Peter was going to take hold.

"Never mind now, Pete! When I'm better you can tell me all about it." He rested a moment, dropping his head back against the cushions while Peter, by a mighty effort, forced back his exultation. Then the old man roused himself and said, "My check books're in that table drawer I think, Pete. I'll give you a check on Ithaca and two on New York."

Peter crossed to the table, got the books and laid them before his father.

"My fountain pen, now," said Kingsland. "I'll sign my name and you can fill them in."

"Use mine!" Peter volunteered, drawing in a quick breath.

How extraordinarily happy he was! Well might that pen brought from Berlin sign swift power against the hands harassing Teutonic majesty. Tenderly, he placed it in the trembling fingers and opened one of the check books, but Senator Kingsland paid no attention to them for a thin, spectral hand was crawling toward his own.



His fingers loosened their hold on the pen, and it dropped to the floor.

"I can't do it, Peter," he groaned. "I can't!"

The spirit hand faded, and when Kingsland saw the ghost-boy again he was back at the edge of the wide grate.

Without replying, Peter picked up the pen. He was boiling within, but outwardly he was calm, save for the red that was slowly mounting to his brow.

"I can't do it!—I can't," moaned Kingsland, and then to Peter's surprise he burst into tears, the emaciated body shaking as if attacked by ague. In genuine distress, Peter called the nurse, Senator Kingsland was put to bed, and strict injunctions were given that he should not be disturbed in any way.

\* \* \* \* \*

From that time on Peter Kingsland's troubles multiplied by the hour. More than two weeks dragged slowly by. In answer to Meggs' incessant hounding, he was able to pay over but dribbles of money, mere aggravations to the Citizens' voracious appetites.

One morning late in June, Stein's daily letter was more than usually insistent and insulting. There was nothing to do but to get his sister to help him. The result was that Miss Kingsland took the train for New York, charged by her brother to use her blandishments on Stein and explain matters to procure a little delay.

Just before he had bidden his sister goodbye, Sarah said to him,

"Now, Peter, do as you said you would! Attend to that Ketchel girl while I'm gone."

So later in the day, Peter ordered Benson to drive to Rogues' Harbor. He had to save his boy, his splendid son from the blandishments of a common, ignorant girl. As he rode along the smooth, macadam road, he realized with sweat-beaded face that Teddy's welfare was even dearer to him than any triumph Prussia might have over her enemies.

After he'd left the car and had gone part way down the hill, he stopped in the grass-grown lane and looked

critically at the Ketchel farmhouse. Never would he be able to understand how Theodore could be enamoured of a girl who lived in such a place.

He walked to the house and rapped smartly at the front door and waited. A thin girl with furrowed brow answered his summons, and Peter Kingsland touched his hat to her.

Olive looked him over from head to foot.

"Herman Ketchel, does he live here?" inquired Peter.

"Ja! . . . Come on in." Olive's invitation was given very grouchily.

She ushered him into a small, front room which looked and smelt as if it hadn't been opened for ages. Once alone, he glanced about. A few cheap pictures were tilted crookedly on the walls, and the furniture was old and shabby. Occupying the place of honor on the mantle shelf between a gilt vase filled with live-for-ever and a little shell-covered cabinet, stood a picture of the Kaiser.

The sound of uneven steps in the hall outside announced the girl's return, and when she came to the door, Peter turned and bowed expectantly.

"Come on in the kitchen," she said. "Grandpap's old, an' he's got pains today."

Peter followed the thin, limping figure through a short, dark hall into a hot murky room where a haze of tobacco smoke clung to the ceiling like a cloud. Grandfather Ketchel sat in his chair by the window. For an instant he gazed at Peter, as he loomed before him in all his magnificence. Then the old man scowled. Here was another swell, and grandpap hated swells.

He growled a word or two which Peter didn't understand, nodded at a chair, sniffed and grinned, puffed on his clay pipe, and sniffed and grinned again.

Peter didn't know whether to regard the contortions of the withered face as a smile of welcome or not, but the sight of such human decay made him sick. Of what possible service could this man be to Germany's plans in America? He sat down in the chair pointed out, and glanced at the girl standing by the stove.

"I'd like to speak to you alone a little while, Herr Ketchel," he remarked.

Grandfather Ketchel raised his cane and shook it at Olive. She didn't notice the action with any show of fear, but she went out, and through the window, Peter could see her limping toward the barn.

"There's no one else here?" he questioned.

"Nein."

"Then may I speak?"

"Ja! if you've got anything to say!"

Peter considered a moment.

"You've relatives in Germany," he suggested presently.

Grandfather Ketchel threw up his head in a movement quicker than he had made in many a long day.

"Ja! Gott im Himmel, a stack of 'em. . . . Why?"

The younger man endured the older man's scrutiny composedly.

"I was told to come and see you," he said finally.

"How do you stand in reference to the war?"

Ire flashed in the old man's faded eyes, and the gorge rose in his throat. He got to his feet shaking, every little muscle in his face working like so many separate cords.

"How do I stand, mister?" he repeated. "I dunno as it's any of your business, but I don't mind tellin' you. I'm for the Fatherland, God bless 'er. Deutschland uber alles!"

That was just what Peter wanted to hear.

"I've messages from friends of yours in—in Prussia," he stated.

"Out with 'em," mumbled Ketchel, dropping back once more into his chair.

Stein had given Peter this man's name. Meggs too had indicated that great power had been wielded from Rogues' Harbor in days gone by, and wielded by the claw-like hands there, claspings a clay pipe.

"Results count," went over in Peter's mind, thinking of Teddy.

"First," he said deliberately, "tell me what we're going to do about the war."

Ketchel coughed, sniffed, grinned, then wobbled in his chair.

"Blow this whole damned country into the sea," he snorted.

Peter's upper lip curled slightly.

"Unfortunately, we can't do that!" he said. "Our Prussian King doesn't want that to happen!"

Ketchel stared at the speaker. "Our King," the handsome man had said. In spite of his Vandyke beard and his corner-curved mustache, and his stilted manners, this fellow looked like a Yankee to Herman Ketchel.

"Are you German?" he demanded. "I wouldn't a thought so."

After a moment's consideration, Kingsland leaned far forward in his chair.

"I'm a Citizen of the World," he affirmed in a low tone.

The farmer looked at him fully thirty seconds, and Peter's red-brown eyes didn't change in expression. Then grandpap's blue lips slid back and he grinned, sniffed and grinned again.

"That means," he commented shrewly, "that no matter where you was born, you want the Fatherland to be top dog. . . . Nicht wahr?"

"Something like that," conceded Peter.

"What's your name?"

"Peter Kingsland," was the reply.

The old man's face ordinarily pale, turned gray.

"Kingsland!" he repeated dazedly. "Any relation to the Senator of Ithaca?"

"His son," nodded Peter.

Ketchel's muscles twitched painfully.

"He sent you here today—mebbe—heh?"

Peter shook his head.

"No! My father hasn't yet learned what Germany ruling the world would mean to the people in it. . . . I've lived in Germany, and I know."

"Humph," grunted grandfather Ketchel.

"I only left Berlin a little while ago," explained Peter.

"I was told you——"

Ketchel's cane waving in the air broke off his statement.

"I'm for the Fatherland, an' everybody knows that!" he sniffed. "But in these days, mister, you can't trust folks." . . . He held out a shaking, thin hand. "Put your paw in mine, an' tell me by a grip you're what you say you are."

The tobacco-stained, grimy fingers made Peter shiver in all his fastidious soul. But nevertheless he gave the sign required—just the proof the German wanted that he was a Citizen of the World.

"I guess you're all right!" grandpap grinned in appreciation. "Now, out with what you got to say."

Before he spoke, Peter lighted a cigarette.

"You've got a granddaughter," he then said.

"Ja! Got two of 'em."

It was some moments before Peter put his next question.

"Yes, the one who just went out, and—and another?" he said.

Ketchel pulled violently on the stem of his pipe.

"Ja! An' a damn nuisance Judy Ketchel is too" he muttered, tapping the pipe on the tin pan. "But la, la, a feller's got to keep his own in his house whether he hates 'em or not."

His shrewd, old eyes took in his companion. This last remark had been made to find out if the man before him knew anything of Judy's past history. In satisfaction, he filled his pipe. The face but a few feet away hadn't changed enough to arouse grandpap's suspicions.

"She's a nuisance to me too," burst forth Peter, throwing the butt of a cigarette through the open doorway.

"Dunder und Blitzen! How to you, mister?" queried Ketchel, blinking his eyes nervously.

Peter loathed the task he'd undertaken. It seemed as if he were betraying Theodore. But then his son would be grateful to him some day, just as the people of the United States would show their appreciation when the time came for Germany to bring real culture into the broad lands of America.

"My boy's in love with her," he said curtly, "and I came here to see if you could do anything about it."

Grandpap's old brain did not take in directly what the



Other had said. But when at last it soaked through his mind, he began to laugh, that terrible laugh which made people who heard it shiver. In his mind was the picture of this handsome fellow's father, the picture of a rosy, baby face and wads of money he had sent to friends in Germany.

"I could split my sides, man alive!" he gasped, after his mirth had subsided a little.

A haughty expression swept over Peter's countenance.

"It would probably be very advantageous for your granddaughter to marry my son," he remarked in German, "but——"

Grandpap chuckled, sniffed and grinned as he made an upward motion with his pipe.

"She won't," he snickered. "She can't! Judy's been chose by another man, a fine, young German."

Even amidst that terrible mirth Peter recognized the ring of truth. Then what Meggs had told him was so.

"And she's going to marry him?" he demanded jerkily.

"Ja!" replied grandpap.

"When?"

Between two heavy pulls on the pipe grandpap cackled,

"I dunno, mebbe soon, mebbe not!" he said. "Can't tell whether Judy-flack'll drink 'til you get 'er nose close to the trough. Sometimes she does it makin' no fuss an' sometimes she kicks like a hit steer. Can't tell, I say, mister."

This grandpap got out in a mixture of German and English, and it didn't please Peter.

"But she meets my son every day," he said, exasperated. "I imagine, though I'm not sure, the affair started when she saved my father, the time the horse ran away with him. . . . The day I came home."

"What horse?" snarled farmer Ketchel.

Peter settled back a little.

"Then you haven't heard about it?"

"Nein, the brat ain't said nothin' to me!" grouched grandpap.

Then Peter told Ketchel of his home coming, and the



sight that had met his eyes there on State Street. Ketchel made no remark until Peter said,

"Can't you do something to stop it, Herr Ketchel? I'd consider it a great favor if you would."

Grandpap gazed at the speaker steadfastly for some seconds.

"So?" he said finally, his little eyes gleaming. "Now what'd it be worth to you if I bust up this thing with your kid an' the brat?"

Peter felt his ears grow hot. Surely as Sarah had said the Citizens were a money grabbing lot.

"All I can get my hands on," he snapped crossly.

"Name it in dollars," insisted grandpap.

Peter made a rapid, mental calculation. Then he said,

"Of course, I'm grateful to the girl for what she did——"

Grandfather leaned over in his chair and interrupted the speaker with a horrible, German oath.

"Drop that cant," he growled, "drop it, or we end now. . . . I can tell by the look of you that you lie, mister."

Mentally treading on a desire to strike that withered face, Peter observed,

"You're very frank, Herr Ketchel."

"I'm more'n that," pursued grandpap. "A lot more! . . . What's your price if I get Judy to leave your boy alone?"

Under his breath, Peter, at random, stated an amount.

"'Tain't enough," sniffed Ketchel, thinking of Senator Kingsland. "Now your father? He knows your boy's interested in Judy, I bet?"

"Ja," drawled Peter.

"An' he takes to it?"

"Ja!" said Peter, once more.

"Raise your cash twice an' I'll do what you want," offered Ketchel.

Double the amount meant much more than Peter was sure of. In fact he wasn't sure of any amount large enough to appease the hounds at his heels, but his face flushed when he remembered he had to get that and more.

His oath taken on the mighty head of the Kaiser rushed over him, leaving him cold.

"Sehr gut," he replied, trying to assume an indifference he did not feel. "Double it if you like, Herr Ketchel."

\* \* \* \* \*

Meanwhile, Olive had joined Judy in the barn.

"He's a big, red-headed duffer, handsome, an' I'll bet awful rich, Jude dear!" Olive had told her.

Red-headed! Big! Rich! That fitted her Teddy, thought Judy. Perhaps he'd come to talk to grandpap.

"Did you hear his name, Ollie?" she breathed. "Did he ask for me?"

"Nein. He ain't young, an' he didn't say a word about you! But he's from Ithaca, all right. Rogues' Harbor nor McKinney's Point ain't got a man nothin' like him."

The purple light faded from Judy's eyes. She recalled distinctly a man Olive's description fitted, and it wasn't Teddy Kingsland either.

"You said you'd help me, Ollie," she murmured.

"An' so I will," the lame girl averred stoutly. "I told Jim what you said 'bout your havin' friends to stand by you. He'll leave you alone from now on, I reckon."

In a flash of memory, Shuckies' sorry appearance when Teddy got through with him that memorable day brought an appreciative grin to Judy's lips.

"I reckon you're right, Ollie," she said, "Jim met one of 'em a while ago," and then she began her faltering tale about Teddy Kingsland. She rehearsed the story of the Senator's peril on the heavy, black horse, and touched lightly Jim's attack upon herself on the lake road.

A frown gathered and stayed on Olive's forehead.

"Jim made that nag run away!" she muttered after a silence of a few minutes. "Now, didn't he, Judy-la?"

"Mebbe he did, darlin'," admitted Judy. "But makin' a old horse run like hell don't say he won't be a good pappy. Some time, Ollie, oh, mebbe in years an' years from now after I've read every book in the world, I'm goin' to get married."

"Himmel!" ejaculated Olive.

Just then grandfather howled Judy's name, and she jumped up.

"It's me he's callin'," she said shiveringly.

"'Raus mitt you then," cried Olive. "If 'twas me grandpap was callin', I'd give him something to think about. But as long's you ain't grit enough to stand up for yourself—'raus mitt you!"

As Ollie finished her sneering remark, Judy turned and flew to the farmhouse. The kitchen door was open, and tremblingly, she mounted the few steps and saw grandpap seated in his chair. Then she went into the room very slowly, and without asking her grandfather what he wanted, she faced Peter Kingsland.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### "'RAUS MITT YOU."

THERE was a dreadful silence for a few seconds during which Peter Kingsland and Judy Ketchel stared straight at each other.

Then grandpap broke the spell by coughing hoarsely. Judy flashed her eyes from Peter to him. The old man sniffed and grinned at her, lifted his cane a little from the floor and pointed to a spot in front of him.

"Come over here, Judy-flack," he grated.

Judy went forward as fast as she could. She was trembling so, her feet lagged in spite of her desire to obey her grandfather.

"I hear you been to Ithaca, huzzy!" grousched Ketchel. "It's so, ain't it?"

His small, faded eyes were snapping at her, and Judy knew another pair were piercing her from the back.

"Yep, grandpap," she replied, terrified.

"An' it's true, I 'spose, you been meetin' this feller's son on the sly," Ketchel husked.

The girl turned partly around, backing against the wall, and Peter noticed how very blue her eyes were. Judy suddenly felt as if hot ashes had burned her tongue so she couldn't use it.

"You been laggin' on the shore with a swell, eh, Judy-flack?" grandpap repeated. "Speak, or I'll brain you."

"Yep," came from Judy in a gasping breath.

"An' 'bout this horse business. . . . What about that? . . . How come you in Ithaca, makin' a show of your legs to the hull damn town? What 'bout that, eh, Judy-flack?"

When grandpap put questions, one after the other, always in the same tone of voice, Judy's blood ran cold. Minute by minute, he had been working himself into a

terrible rage, and now he was leaning over toward her waiting for an explanation. She couldn't mention Senator Kingsland, for she'd promised not to tell she even knew his name, so being unable to answer she remained silent.

"Ain't I told you, Gott in Himmel knows how many times, you couldn't go to Ithaca?" demanded Ketchel.

The yellow head bent forward ever so slightly in assent.

"Then, why didn't you mind me, Judy-flack? Best open your mouth an' out with what happened about that horse——" Grandpap was almost doubled up so near had his wobbling head thrust itself toward her.

"Oh, I guess you know well enough what I did, grandpap," Judy got out thickly, "if—if he's been talkin' to you. It ain't no use for me to go over it again."

One of her swift, blue, defiant glances directed at him, almost impelled Peter to bound up and strike her. But instead, he leaned back in his chair.

"My dear young lady," he began sauely, and then he paused to light a cigarette. "You mustn't see my son any more."

The tones of his voice were as cold, as polished as ice, and shivers ran to the ends of Judy's fingers. Her heart sunk, until her body held but an empty, sick vacuum. Not to see Teddy anymore! It was too horrible!

"Why mustn't I?" she undertoned quiveringly. "He loves me! He told me so, an' he told you, too. He—he ain't a liar, Teddy ain't, is he?"

Torrents of blood surged into Kingsland's face. Before the artless simplicity of this ignorant, country girl, he was ashamed.

"My son's young," he said. "He doesn't know his own mind yet, and I came purposely today to tell you that you mustn't see him any more."

"An' I say she won't see him nuther," burst out granddaddy, like a thunderclap. "Judy-flack, whose word goes in this house?"

Slow tears gathered in the girl's eyes, and she swallowed hard to keep from crying aloud in agony.

"Yours, grandpap," she choked.

“I just been tellin’ this man, miss,” and grandpap’s cane pointed to Peter, “that you was meant for one of your own kind. Sliver’s got a right to you, an’ now, this minute, I’m goin’ to make you swear you’ll marry Jim without any more fuss. When I get done with you today, huzzy, you won’t want to meet any more high-toned pups.”

Peter lowered his lids. Some instinct impelled him to hide the triumph in his eyes. More than anything else he desired to see this girl, this low-born creature who had dared aspire to his incomparable son, brought to the depths of humiliation. From the corner of his eye, he watched Judy moving away from the thin, old figure in the chair. With a deep growl, Ketchel struggled up, and Peter lifted his head.

“A cane’s meant to use on women, mister,” sniffed grandpap, grinning, “an’ Judy’s felt it many a time. Since she wasn’t bigger’n a rabbit, I’ve whaled her regular most every day, but she’s a hellion, Judy is. . . . Now, to-day——” he leaned on his cane, pallid-faced and enraged, “Now,” he repeated, “you’re goin’ to see ’er get all’s comin’ to ’er. She won’t even bob her head to your kid any more.”

To remain perfectly passive was almost more than Peter could do. He forced himself to incline his head. “It’s your own affair, Herr Ketchel,” was all he said.

Judy was staring at her grandfather, every nerve in her body uttering its separate protest, as if she were wrapped in thistles. Grandpap was planning to beat her into promising she’d never speak to Teddy Kingsland again! After today, she could no more smile into the ardent, red-brown eyes, nor rest a moment on the heart so full of love for her. Mechanically, her hand touched the bulge in her pocket. Her little Bible was there, and dazedly she tried to recall its many precious promises. Somehow, though, she could only remember the big, red-haired man in the chair, and Ketchel’s snarling words. She could see that slowly, like relentless misery, grandpap was slipping toward her. Terribly frightened, she crept steadily backward.

“Stand still,” growled grandpap.



Swaying, Judy halted, and from under his brows Peter watched the scene with fascination.

"I'm goin' to give you the lickin' of your life, Judy-flack," Ketchel wheezed. "First, for goin' to Ithaca when you well knew I didn't want it! Then a devil of a whacking for the way you're treatin' Jim." He grinned at Peter. "If you ain't never seen a German whale a woman, just watch."

By this time the tottering old man was very close to Judy. He raised his cane, but his trembling legs seemed unable to hold him up, and he lowered the stick once more to the floor, where he leaned panting upon it.

"Perhaps the—the young lady will promise she'll not pursue my son any more," drawled Peter. "And also promise to keep away from Kingsland Court. . . . I don't want her there."

A red-brown, taunting gaze locked for an instant with a pair of flaring, blue eyes.

"No, mister," said Judy, "no! I won't make no promises like that if grandpap licks the skin off my bones."

Her refusal, spoken in a high nervous tone, gave Ketchel renewed strength. A perceptible click of his tongue shot through the evil grin on his face, and he flung up his cane once more, but it was held suspended in the air. Grandpap tugged at it, glanced backward, and saw Olive. She wrenched the stick from Ketchel's bony fingers and threw it into the corner. With more strength than any one would have given her credit for, she pushed her grandfather backward into his chair.

"Set, grandpap," she hissed, "just set."

Never in all the history of the farmhouse had such a thing as this happened. True, Judy had many times heard Olive threaten granddaddy, but to lay rough hands on him, and for her sake too, brought deep, tearless sobs from her throat. She sagged against the wall, terrified at her cousin's bravery.

Ketchel blinked at Olive, his mouth open with wonderment.

"If you so much as lay your hand on Judy-flack, grandpap," barked Olive, "I'll spill your brains all over the

kitchen floor.” She limped to Judy and tried to smile at her. “Come on, Jude,” she suggested, “let’s be barn cats and beat this damn, red-headed duffer all the way to Ithaca.”

Then her smile faded, and she swung about facing Peter.

“I heard what you said, mister,” she said in throaty tones.

Peter got to his feet instantly.

“Perhaps you did hear,” he interposed, trying to speak calmly, “and I don’t care if you did. . . . I’ve a father’s right to save my boy, and I will. . . . God gave me that right, Miss—Miss Ketchel.”

Olive laughed harshly.

“God!” she taunted. “A heap you know about him! Why, you wouldn’t know Him if you come smack face to face in Ithaca! . . . Now, Judy-flack here,” and she flung out her hand toward the cowering girl, “Judy’s got a real livin’, lovin’ God, while you an’ grandpap ain’t got nothin’ but Gott. A German Gott that kills and tortures with bullets an’ licks, blazin’ fire on his people that eats the flesh off’n their bones. . . . A heathen devil your German Gott is, mister!”

By the time she had finished this denunciation, Peter’s mouth was as wide open as grandpap’s.

“You come here,” Olive shrilled on, “just to stir up granddaddy Ketchel, an’ now——” She snatched up the little stool Denny had used. “Now—’raus mitt you, you damn mutt! . . . Get out, an’ stay out. If you ever come to this house again, I’ll do more to you’n I’ll do to grandpap here if he peeps.”

With the upraised stool she swayed toward Peter, and his face flamed red until crimson blood had darkened his ears. He edged to the door, Olive following him.

“You’ll get no promise from Judy-flack, hairy-face,” she cried, “an’ if grandpap tries to make her give one, I’ll smash him. See? . . . Take your red head out of this house. . . . ’Raus mitt you. . . . Ja! . . . That’s right! . . . Get out!”

Peter was at the door before the lame girl could strike

him and he took the ground at one stride of the steps. Then Olive threw the stool directly at him.

"Better make your legs waddle to Ithaca if they got any strength in 'em, red head," she snorted, "for the scrub-bucket'll come next."

Peter dodged the stool and walked rapidly away from the house. In the road he turned and looked back, and the lame girl standing in the door lifted a set of twiggling fingers to her nose.

"Red head," she screamed. "Come again some day, an' you'll get worse."

Then she wheeled back into the kitchen and crossed to Judy.

"Come on to the barn, Jude darlin'," she said softly. "Grandpap's gone to sleep."

"Schönes Liebchen, kleines Mädchen," muttered Ketchel, his gray head leaning against the chair.

## CHAPTER XXXII

### PETER IS TOLD

PETER paused a moment at Senator Kingsland's door and listened. Not a sound came from within the room. It wasn't to Peter's liking to have a wrangle with his father, but he'd seen it coming ever since the first interview about the money. To bother the old man when he was sick was too bad, of course, but if he weren't able to attend to business, he ought to turn it over to somebody else. Peter smiled grimly. He'd like to look after it. The power to sign Roderick Kingsland's name would be all he needed.

Presently he tapped on the door, and a voice from within called, "Come in."

When Peter entered Senator Kingsland was sitting by the window, his face haggard with sleepless nights and moody days.

"I wanted a few words with you, father," he began.

"And I with you, Pete," interrupted the Senator. "I was about to send Briggs for you."

The elder man slumped lower in his chair, and Peter sat down opposite him and waited to hear what his father had to say.

"I haven't been myself at all lately, son," complained Kingsland, "and that parade experience was altogether too much for me."

"I'm sorry, dad. I really am," was the answer, "but Carmen will bring you through. . . . He knows his business all right."

Roderick Kingsland's head sunk down over his thin chest.

"No one can help me any," he muttered, "not even Dave!"

Impatiently, Peter shrugged his shoulders. From his

father's grumbling, he feared he'd fare no better this time about money than he had before.

"Nonsense, pater!" he broke forth. "That's not like you. . . . You'll be all right in a day or two."

"Perhaps," Roderick assented. "Possibly, I'll be better after I've talked with you. I've something on my mind. . . . That's the trouble with me."

Peter drew a quick breath.

"Well, I'm here to listen and help," he replied, and then he laughed. "As Teddy says, 'Get it out of your system!'"

Roderick shifted the pillow against which his head rested.

"It'll take some time to tell it," he murmured finally.

"No matter about that," smiled Peter.

Senator Kingsland contemplated his son for some time.

"And I'll have to go back a bit, when you were much younger," he added.

"All right, dad! . . . Go ahead!"

For a few minutes the silence in the room was intermittently broken by the clock's slow tick-tock and the distant, foggy blare of a motor horn.

"I've never spoken to you of a certain, young client I had at the time I was practicing law here?" Senator Kingsland inquired at length.

"A client?" Peter repeated. "You had many clients, didn't you?"

"That's true, but you never knew I had this one," was the bitter reply. "Oh, I was careful no one should know about him, but—but he trusted me all the same."

"Well?" Peter's monosyllable was almost perfunctory.

"When you asked me for that half million the other day for some scheme of yours, I simply couldn't let you have it." He paused and gripped his fingers together tightly. "Because *he* wouldn't let me. . . . He put his hand on mine and stopped me."

"He?" Peter's amazement voiced itself in the single word. No one had been present but his father and himself. "He stopped you? . . . Who? . . . What are you talking about, dad?"

"He watches me all the time," the old man ran on weakly. "He won't let me alone a minute, day or night. He's right there behind you, now."

Senator Kingsland lifted an emaciated hand and pointed toward the fireplace. Involuntarily, Peter turned and, seeing nothing, whirled back again.

"Who? . . . Where?" he questioned. "What do you mean?"

"The client I told you about," Roderick answered.

Peter smothered a desire to swear openly.

"Client?" he cried. "What client? . . . What's he got to do with our affairs?"

Senator Kingsland leaned forward. He appeared very worn and weak. He glanced beyond his son a moment, and when he turned back again, his face was a little more peaceful, for the spectre-boy had shown himself less menacing, as if he knew and approved of Roderick's intention.

"Client!" he echoed. "Everything, Peter! He's got everything to say about our affairs." Peter's hand lifted in protest, but the speaker persisted, "Of course, he's got everything to say, because——" The old voice stopped, and a long silence ensued. Roderick Kingsland was fighting the same battle between his conscience and the fear of disgrace and punishment that had made his life a continual torment. "Because," he took up again very slowly, "because all the money we have in the world belonged to him, and—and—Great God! . . . As long as it's got to be told, here goes! I—I—I stole it!"

In speaking those last terrible words, he raised himself completely from his chair but dropped back with a sobbing sigh, relieved of a load he was glad to be rid of.

Stupified, Peter looked at his father as if he were some insane man making a perfectly impossible statement.

"You stole it!" he cried. "You stole money? . . . Why, why you're crazy, dad!"

"I'm nothing of the kind, Peter," retorted Kingsland. "I took charge of the young man's affairs. He was in difficulties, and—and I filched all he had. . . . Now, that's the fact."

Filched! What a word to hear from the lips of the



master of Kingsland Court. He couldn't—he wouldn't believe it.

"But, my God, father, it's impossible!" he exclaimed.

He got up and tramped the room in excitement. It was all a lie! It must be! A dreadful illusion of a twisted brain!

"Sit down, Peter," Kingsland said wearily, "and I'll tell you about it. I can't think when you're so nervous." After his son had taken a chair, he explained. "This young man had a huge fortune. At first, I made him believe he'd lost quantities of it through speculation, and then," his voice quavered and ceased.

"And then?" prompted Peter, sharply.

Senator Kingsland leaned over and said something in a low voice.

"No, no," ejaculated Peter, "you didn't do that. Why, God in Heaven, you couldn't have done that!"

"I did! I did just that!" gasped Kingsland.

Peter turned his head so as not to face his father.

"Well, sir?" The strain he was under made his voice cold and hard. "What are you going to do about it?"

"Make it right, Pete, the best I can!"

"Specifically?" Peter questioned, icy-toned. "Just what are you going to do?"

Kingsland grew a shade paler. He had hoped his son would help him rectify his crime.

"The man's dead, I think," he murmured. "I was so busy spending his money I forgot to keep my eye on him, and when I—I—did enquire for him he was gone. . . . There's—there's nothing to do but to—to—hunt up the woman, give her back her child and her fortune, and then—then of course, we'd have no money, or, that is, not much."

The whole miserable story was out—finished in a weak voice. Peter considered his father for a space of time during which he was planning rapidly.

"But, father," he objected at length, "do you realize what this means to us, to me and to Teddy?"

Deep dejection settled over Roderick Kingsland's face.

"Teddy!" he muttered. "My God! Yes, I under-

stand! . . . He kept me silent for years when every hour has been a living hell! And there's Judy Ketchel——"

"Teddy would be ruined!" Peter kept on. "Though, why you should be so exercised about Judy Ketchel, I can't see."

A bitter sound fell from Senator Kingsland's lips.

"Oh, you don't, eh?" he exclaimed. "Well, Peter, I can, and that's enough!"

Peter got to his feet. His father waved him back to his chair. Somehow, he dared not disobey that feeble hand.

"Sit still!" said the older man irritably. "Don't flop about. It's hard enough without your making it worse. . . . You spoke of Judy. . . . You know very well Teddy loves her!"

This time Peter swore audibly, but Roderick Kingsland paid no attention.

"Perhaps, if you hadn't cornered that boy at every turn, I wouldn't have nerved myself to tell you this," the old man continued. "You thought because I was sick these past few weeks I didn't know, but I did. Now you've got to take your iron fist off of him. . . . He's miserable! . . . This isn't Germany, and you're not the Kaiser, Mr. Peter!"

Peter reddened and bit his lip. No man on earth, not even his father should interfere with his plans for his boy's future. That must be understood immediately.

"Theodore's my son," he retorted. "We'll not discuss him, please. . . . You're wide of your first topic, I think."

The touch of sarcasm and hauteur in the tones infuriated Senator Kingsland to a state of frenzy.

"Not so damn wide," he rapped out. "Both Teddy and Judy come into this thing quite prominently. . . . They damn well do!"

"Stop!" cried Peter.

Roderick sat up straight, his eyes blazing at his son.

"I won't stop, I won't stop!" he cried. "Who do you think you are to treat a boy—a man like Theodore the

way you're doing? . . . Now, then you've got to quit and quit quick."

"I see," said Peter, struggling with his temper, "I'll have to take Ted away. . . . It's been my idea for a long time to send him somewhere."

"Oh! You'll send him away, will you?" Kingsland raged. "Now, how could you go to work to do it? . . . You couldn't earn a dollar to save your life." He paused and wiped the moisture from his lips. "You're my son. By God, yes! . . . That you are! . . . And at this minute, looking you in the face, I say I'm sorry for it." His muscles twitched nervously and his body swayed as if it were difficult to keep it upright. "But son or no son, you'll not separate that boy and me if I can help it."

Both men were angry, both trying for self control. Peter got up slowly and just as he was about to speak, Senator Kingsland burst forth,

"Who do you suppose Judy Ketchel is, anyhow?"

"A Rogues' Harborite, I believe," replied Peter, shortly. "I know she's a granddaughter of Herman Ketchel, and she had a common mother and a father who was a drunkard."

"That's a lie! . . . Now, listen to me. Judy, little Judy Ketchel is——" the Senator crouched back as if an invisible hand had struck him.

White as wax, Peter stepped close to his father.

"Who is she?" he demanded.

"She's—she's," Senator Kingsland faltered and then went on, "she's the only child of the client I just told you of."

The words swept Peter back a couple of steps. The yellow-haired girl of Rogues' Harbor rose before him. She would be a Judy to be reckoned with if she ever learned this thing his father had just told him.

"I forbid you to let her know anything about it," he gritted savagely.

More of a grin than a smile widened Senator Kingsland's lips.

"Oh, you do, eh?" he returned. "How long since you've had the right to forbid me to do what I please?"

. . . Well, it's just this way, sir, I'm going to find that girl's mother and restore the money to them both before I die."

Two long strides took Peter to his father's side.

"That'll never happen while I live," he vowed, setting his teeth.

"I've made up my mind, though, Peter," sighed Kingsland. "I must, son, I must! I do want your help in it!"

A bitter sneer widened about Peter's lips.

"You won't," he contended. "There's not a bit of evidence in existence. Outside of your word, there isn't a particle of proof of your story."

"Well, my word's enough," snapped the Senator. "Isn't it?"

"Not in this instance, it isn't," Peter retorted.

"You mean, Pete?" And again the trembling old man sat up.

"I mean your story's unreasonable," Peter laughed insolently, "and when you go to talking about blue-eyed ghosts and spectral hands, you throw doubt on the whole of it."

"I wouldn't bank too much on that, Peter," the Senator responded coldly, "and in the meantime, until I'm able to return the money to its real owners, we'll spend as little as possible."

Overwhelmed, Peter sat down like one turned to stone.

"But, pater," he burst out, "you know I want some money right away. And a lot of it. I've simply got to have it!"

"Well, you won't get it from me," Roderick shot back. "As long as you're decent about Teddy, I'll continue your allowance, but that's all."

The Senator leaned back wearily. The interview had almost exhausted the feeble remnant of his strength, although he had won a little peace out of it. Indeed, he imagined he could see in the softened gaze of the phantom-boy there at the fireplace, a tinge of purple that reminded him of the girl who'd called him "Good man" and told him she loved him.

"I'm awfully tired, Pete," he whispered. "Please go away now!"

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### A LICK AGAINST GERMANY

"I HEAR a hen cacklin'," said Judy Ketchel one mornin' a few days after Peter Kingsland's call. "Mebbe one of 'em's laid an egg."

Grandfather Ketchel and his two granddaughters were sitting in the farmhouse kitchen, and Judy was darning one of his gray socks. She got up and laid the stocking on the table.

"I'll go see if I can find it, grandpap," she added.

"It's that old speckie, I bet," offered Olive. "She's been layin' in a hid nest. . . . We ain't had one of her eggs in a week."

Grandpap took his pipe from his mouth.

"Go an' look for 'em, Judy-flack," he directed, waving his pipe at her, "an' if you break one I'll cane you."

Olive arose, stretching herself lazily.

"I'll go an' see Judy-flack don't break none, granddaddy," she drawled. "Come on, Jude!"

The two girls walked together to the barn. Overhead, the brazen sun filled the air with quivering, heat waves and here and there, where the farmers' teams moved slowly through the fields, little clouds of dust hung. At the barn door, Judy stopped a moment and looked over Lake Cayuga, gleaming in the sunshine. Then she followed her cousin into the barn.

"Something's happened, Ollie?" she questioned. "You been tryin' for most an hour to get me out. . . . I just couldn't think of anything that'd dust grandpap's eyes. He's awful keen today, Ollie. . . . Now, what'd you want?"

"It's the worst thing yet," moaned Olive, beginning to cry. "Judy, you'll never get Jim for me while you live."

"Who said I wouldn't, I'd like to know," Judy threw out. "Let's set, honey! . . . There! . . . Now! yap me the hull thing from beginnin' to end."

Olive looked about in fearful anxiety.

"Did you hear anything last night?" she ventured.

Judy shook her head.

"Nothing but the wind blowin' a little when I went to sleep. . . . Why?"

The lame girl leaned her cheek wearily on the palm of her hand and wiped away her tears with her apron.

"Sliver come along about two o'clock, an' slung a stone up in my room through the window," she whispered. "He wanted a bottle of grandpap's beer."

"An' you got one for 'im?" asked Judy, immediately interested.

"Sure, darlin', I had to! . . . I couldn't sleep thinkin' of him thirsty. . . . I got him four, an' by not drinkin' any myself Jim got a right good spiff on."

"He's goin' to do something to Kingsland, huh?" queried Judy anxiously.

"Nein, not this time," shivered Olive, "but it's almost worser'n that!"

"Go on an' tell me what he said," urged Judy, "an' don't keep nothin' back."

Olive's head sunk down lower on her thin chest.

"I don't hardly dast, Jude," she muttered. "It's so awful!"

"Tell it," insisted Judy.

Then Olive began to whisper, and the longer she whispered the more she shook, and the whiter and more terrified grew Judy Ketchel. After the recital was over, she bent forward, cupping her chin in her fingers.

"When's he goin' to do it?" she demanded.

"Tonight! . . . An' Jude, honest I done my best to get 'im to swear off helpin' the Citizens, but he won't. . . . I don't want to say mean things against your boy's daddy—but—but he's in it, too."

"Ollie!" cried Judy. "He wasn't——"

"Yes, he's a Citizen, Jim said so!" Olive vowed, wagging her head. "So you see you can't do nothing. . . . When a Kingsland goes in for tricks like that what's the use!"



For two minutes or perhaps a little more, the girls were silent. Then Olive spoke very low.

"Jim'll get croaked for a dirty deed like that!" she groaned. "His brains're about as much good as addled eggs. I've talked 'til my jaw's loose! . . . Any good? . . . Not a bit! . . . He'll get caught this time sure."

Judy jumped up.

"Mebbe he won't!" she replied. "Come on an' lets find an egg or two for grandpap."

\* \* \* \* \*

The great clock in the Library tower was chiming the hour of midnight, the time set for Jim Shuckies to land a stroke for Germany. Part way up South Hill the thickly set windows in the long walls of the Morse Chain Works glowed yellow and told of the many busy workers within.

For a half hour, Judy Ketchel had been crouching under a lilac bush in the yard of the Old Ladies' Home. The clank of the machinery where they were making chains for war tanks came to her faintly. Olive had said Shuckies would come this way, but the hour was past and no sight of Sliver Jim!

The electric light over the street crossing of the D. L. & W. Railroad above her, cast its white rays down the center of South Aurora Street and filled the gutters and yards at the sides of the road with flickering shadows.

Of a sudden, like a dark phantom, Judy saw in the half light a slouching figure rise up across the way. Behind a clenched fist pressed against her lips, she smothered a cry. She knew that gait only too well.

Just how she was going to avert the terrible catastrophe, Peter Kingsland had planned, she didn't know. She could only pray as a simple child prays at its mother's knee, "Our Father who art in Heaven."

Then Shuckies crossed South Aurora Street and slipped along the lower side of the railroad embankment.

The girl could see him like a dark blot in the shadow and followed him. Then all at once, Jim disappeared into a culvert, and Judy, almost overcome with horror, crept into the dark hole.

Like an eel she wriggled out of the culvert into the ditch. Then she raised her head to listen and saw a dark body slide into the narrow passage that led to the engine house. That was Sliver Jim, of course. In another moment, she was peering into the blackness and suddenly a match flared up. In the uncertain glimmer, she recognized Sliver Jim. Almost instantly, the flame was blown out. Then she heard him coming down the passage toward her, but before she darted backward, she caught a glimpse of a cherry-red spot of fire in the tunnel behind him. A moment later Jim dropped into the ditch beside her, almost touching her as he slipped into the culvert once more.

Footsteps on the tracks warned Judy the sentry was passing, and the need for haste drove her frantic. After what seemed an interminable time, she lifted her head and looked again. The spot still glowed in the darkness. It seemed stationary, but Judy knew it was moving steadily forward on its terrible mission.

She climbed into the tunnel and crawled forward as fast as she could. A little prayer of gratitude surged through her when at length she seized the fuse and crushed the spark in her fingers.

Ten minutes later, Judy Ketchel was stealing through the sleeping city, the heavy bomb under her arm. Wearied by the long tramp from Ithaca, she crept up the hill and into the farmhouse and at the top of the stairs, she peeped into Olive's room. The girl sat up instantly.

"Jude!" she breathed.

"I got it," hissed Judy. "Light the light, Ollie."

Shivering with excitement, the lame girl crawled from the bed and lit the small, oil lamp.

Judy held the bomb out to her.

"There 'tis," she whispered. "It can't hurt any one now! I stuck it in a puddle at the salt works. . . . Put it under something, an' tomorrow we'll bury it."

When her cousin had taken the iron cylinder into her arms, Judy continued,

"Ollie, if 'twasn't for your needin' Sliver so bad, I'd go straight off and tell on 'im."

Olive groaned dismally.

"Gott, don't do that, Jude," she gasped. "Please don't do that."

Judy was slipping out of her clothes as Olive dropped on her knees.

"Don't do it, honey, don't," she repeated huskily.

"Oh, I ain't goin' to, of course, I ain't, Ollie," answered Judy, "but I was that mad when I saw him stickin' a match to the thing I could scarcely stand it."

"An' I don't wonder," whispered Olive. "He's sure some devil, Jim is, but—but I love him heaps."

Then, like a flash, Mrs. Lessington's words came into Judy's mind. Olive was doing by Jim just what Honor had said *she* must do about grandpap. Her cousin was keeping on loving Sliver Jim in spite of his wickedness.

Judy wanted to say something very tender, something to banish the memory of the words she had spoken about Jim, but she couldn't frame any words just then.

"Good night," was all that came to her, and, taking up the lamp, she turned toward the door.

"Good night," muttered Olive, crawling into bed.

Pausing, Judy looked back. Her cousin had buried her face in the pillow, and her frail body shook with sobs. Judy crept softly back to the bedside.

"Let's kiss, Ollie," she suggested brokenly. "You an' me's got to stick, if we get them two men, Sliver an' Teddy. . . . Come on, give me a kiss."

Olive turned over and threw her arms out, and Judy gathered her to her heart.

"Lay down by me," sobbed Olive, presently. "Get on your night rag an' sleep here."

A little later, Judy was stretched out beside Olive. Holding the girl close, she queried sleepily,

"You like me a little, teenty bit, don't you, Ollie?"

"More'n that," returned Olive, snuggling close. "I'm beginnin' to like you next to Jim."

"Fine," came from Judy's lips, and then she fell asleep, but for a long time afterwards, Olive lay awake staring at the ceiling.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### TEN BOTTLES OF SUDS

A soft twilight had stolen upon Mc'Kinney's Point on the afternoon Judy Ketchel entered the House of Mystery to say good-bye to her brother. Denny was on the divan and greeted his sister effusively.

"Dave's goin' to take me away," he gurgled, "an' my engine's goin', an' all my soldiers. . . . Nice, ain't it, Judy dear?"

The tears in Judy's eyes were not caused by unhappiness but by solid content. She gave a hasty glance at Doctor Carmen and Honor Lessington. Then she centered upon them her entire attention. What made them act so strangely, and why just at the moment of Denny's deliverance was Honor's gaze on her twisting fingers, and the doctor's hands thrust deep into his pockets?

"What's the matter?" she inquired of David. "You've got something on your mind."

David laughed a little embarrassedly.

"Well, the fact is," he began, "well, you see, Mrs. Lessington and I have decided to tell you something."

A little frown appeared between Judy's startled eyes.

"You've changed your idea 'bout Denny's goin', huh?" she asked, throwing a blue glance from the silent woman back to the speaker.

"No," laughed David Carmen. "Oh, no, not that, but, but— Come here a minute."

Judy went directly to him. In the few steps toward Doctor Carmen, his expression reminded her of Teddy Kingsland—of those times when he'd told her he loved her.

"It can't be anything bad," she ventured, "you look 'sif you was goin' to giggle."

At this both Honor and David laughed.

"Mrs. Lessington has promised to marry me," murmured David. "I'm—I'm very happy, little Judy!"

The girl turned and shot a purple glance at Honor. Then Denny broke the embarrassed silence.

"Lick the liver out of the Huns, Dave," he yelped in a high-pitched tone.

Married! Married! mingled in Judy's mind with Denny's shriek for a Hun's liver. Her Lady of Roses married to Doctor Carmen! Happiness swelled her heart until she feared it would burst.

"Glory!" was what she shouted, and then, "Gimme a kiss, old Dave."

She poked up her rosy lips to Carmen, and smilingly he stooped and kissed her.

"Now, you," gasped Judy, turning to Honor.

With her arms about the woman's neck, she whispered, "I'm that tickled, I could yell!"

Filled with strangely sweet emotions, Honor clasped close the blue-eyed girl in passionate tensi-ty.

"And I'm happy too," she said, "Only—only Doctor Carmen's going away tonight for a week or so." She laughed a little, flushing. "It seems now I can't let him go."

Instantly, David went to them in reassuring eagerness.

"But it's only for such a little while, dear," he protested. "Just to New York."

Judy drew a long breath.

"I'd think it was a awful long ways," she said simply, "if you belonged to me, sir."

"But Senator Kingsland's daughter is ill," explained the doctor, "and I've got to go to New York to see her. . . . Her brother is quite concerned and worried." He looked down upon Judy questioningly.

"She's—she's——," Judy hesitated, and David took it up, "She's Teddy Kingsland's aunt. And, Judy, while I'm gone, you'll come as often as you can to see Mrs. Lessington, won't you?"

"Every day," agreed Judy, gravely.

Later by a few minutes, she and Honor stood on the porch and waved farewell to Denny. In silence, the two waited until the last sound of David's car was lost in the



gloaming. Then they went slowly back into the house.

"I wish you could stay all night, darling," began Honor. "It'll be lonely without Denny."

Her tone was touched with mournfulness, and Judy felt a large lump rise in her throat. She wanted to stay with her friend, but she had to go back to Rogues' Harbor immediately. Slowly she shook her head.

"I'd love it, honey," she choked, "but—but I can't though. I've got to go right now! . . . Oh, I'm just bustin' with happiness for you! . . . There ain't nothin' like havin' a lot of lovin's in your life! . . . He's sure some good man, Doc Carmen is."

\* \* \* \* \*

Rounding the Ketchel farmhouse, Judy observed there was a light in the barn. Carefully she slipped to the kitchen window and saw grandfather Ketchel asleep in his chair. On his wizened face, was the smile, Judy loved to see. His lips moved unceasingly, and as Judy walked toward the barn, her eyes gathered a purple love-light. How she wanted to bring back to grandpap his dream baby! She went into the barn where she found Olive seated in the dim light of a lantern. Steadfastly she regarded her cousin's haggard face.

"You saw Jim!" she ejaculated.

"Ja," grunted Olive, "an' he kicked me plump out of his house."

"The dirty beggar!" snorted Judy, sitting down.

"Guess he didn't have 'nough beer," said Olive in excuse. "When Jim's good and soused, he tells me lots, an' he's sweet and kindlike, but when he's only half spiffed, he's meaner'n rats."

"Rats ain't so bad," meditated Judy. "Then you didn't find out anything?"

"I sure did," nodded Olive, her face wrinkling darkly, "I guess they got old Kingsland for fair this time! But just when the beer got to working good, the bottles give out, an' Sliver shut up like a clam."

All the purple spread away from Judy's eyes.

"You ain't lyin' to me, Ollie?" she questioned.

The other girl shook herself impatiently.



"Of course I ain't. I don't ever lie to you, Judy Ketchel. Ain't I tryin' to get Jim to marry me, an' don't I remember all the times you've kept him out of the coop? But if he won't talk, he won't, that's all."

During the next, few, tense minutes, while Judy was planning, the girls were silent.

"Ollie," said Judy presently, her face pathetic in its gravity, "God knows I hate boozin' something awful, but you just got to get some more beer an' take it up to Sliver."

The lame girl threw out her hands and made a refusal by an emphatic shake of her head.

"I can't, Jude! It ain't possible! . . . Grandpap'd kill me if he knew I was takin' his beer all the time. He's missed a lot of bottles already, an' he growled 'til you could a heard him most to Ithaca when he had to order another case. . . . I can't get no more!"

"But I got to know 'bout what the Citizens 're goin' to do, ain't I, Ollie, dear?" Judy demanded.

"Ja, I suppose so," sighed Olive.

It wasn't Judy's way to put off on some one else any difficult thing that had to be done. She scrambled up.

"You wait here," she told her cousin. "I'll steal the beer. Then you take it to Jim, get 'im soused to the gills an' open 'is kitchen window. . . . I want to hear what he says."

A ghastly expression swept over Olive's face.

"Mebbe Jim'd see you," she faltered. "It'd be death to us both if the Citizens found it out."

"Did they find out 'bout the bomb?" retorted Judy.

"Nein!" The German negative was but a breath from the pallid girl.

"Well, then they won't find out 'bout this uther, honey. . . . We ain't barn cats for nothing, Ollie darlin', an' if the Citizens do their bad work nights, so'll we. . . . Stay here 'til I come back."

Grandpap was still asleep when Judy crawled into the kitchen doorway. She knew that sometimes her grandfather was awakened by the slightest noise. Other times he slumbered through the kitchen clatter without a mur-

mur. On her knees, Judy made her way to the small closet where the store of beer was kept. She had managed to open the door when she heard grandpap stir.

"Who's there?" he muttered sleepily.

Judy didn't answer. Instead she made herself into a ball by hugging her knees to her chin. Grandfather was fumbling for his pipe, but suddenly he became very quiet.

"God's land of plenty, kleines Mädchen," he sighed in his happy dream.

Softly Judy took out several bottles of beer and laid them on the floor. As much as she hated to take what did not belong to her, she knew no other way to bring the truth from Shuckies' lips. For a moment, the yellow head bent over that row of bottles.

"I hate stealin'," she breathed. Then from her pocket, she took the little, red Bible, kissed it and prayed, "God forgimme for stealin' grandpap's beer."

When she stepped into the barn, Olive exclaimed nervously at the large, round bundle Judy was holding in her skirt.

"Lieber Gott, but you got a mess of it, didn't you, Jude?" she cried, scrambling up.

"Sure! Now come on, Ollie! You take the beer an' go on first to Jim's. . . . In a few minutes, I'll come along an' get close to the window. You open it. Do that for sure, won't you?"

"Ja," drawled Olive, transferring the beer bottles to her own skirt. Then she went away into the darkness, and Judy with her eyes full of tears turned out the lantern. She detested the task before her, but her face darkened, and she dashed away the tears when she thought of the black horse, the feeble old man and the deadening explosion of the giant firecracker.

\* \* \* \* \*

Shuckies was seated in the kitchen and lifted his head from his hands impatiently to glare at Olive when she appeared in the doorway.

"I thought I throwed you out once, Miss Ollie Ketchel," he grumbled.

"So you did," muttered Olive, shaking with fear, "but

I brought you some more beer, Jim. I thought as how you'd like another drink. Look at them bottles, old horse! Now you can drink 'til you're happy as a lark."

One by one, she stood the bottles on the table in a row. Jim stared first at them, then at her.

"Grandpap'd bang you a whack on the noodle, if he knew you took all that," was his only remark.

"What he don't know won't hurt 'im any," rejoined Olive, sullenly. "Want to play cards, . . . huh?"

Shuckies shook his head.

"Nein, nein Gott, I don't! . . . I just want to drink. Ollie, gimme some beer. . . . My mind's that mixed up with all the Citizen's business it makes my head ache."

Olive glanced at the kitchen window as she snapped the caps from a couple of bottles.

"Of course, your head'd ache when you ain't got no air," she commented, as she limped to the window. "Here, I'll give you a breath, an' before I go, I'll slam the shutters together."

Shuckies found no fault with this arrangement, and as Olive pushed up the window, he drank a bottle of beer without waiting to pour it into a glass.

Back once more to the table, Olive shoved another bottle over to him, the contents of which he swallowed in a few noisy gulps.

"Guess I'm goin' batty," he growled, dropping the bottle on the floor. "Wish I'd never got in with them Citizen fellers. They get on my nerves, by God, they do!"

"Sure they do," was Olive's reply. "Have another bottle, dearie?"

"I'll have two," grinned Jim, wobbling a little.

"You can have eight, lamchen," said Olive, "for that's the number what's waitin' for you."

"You're a good kid," stammered Jim. "I'd like havin' you 'round all the time if——"

The gurgling of the beer in his throat cut off his words. He set the bottle down unsteadily.

"Damn beer's awful warm," he complained, "but it's better'n none at all. . . . The bomb didn't go off the other night!"

He lifted his head and considered Olive with a pair of bleary eyes.

"So?" was all she said.

"Can't see why, nuther, I can't!" he said, taking up a bottle. "Best set down, Ollie girl."

A strange homesick feeling surged through Olive's heart as she drew a stool to the table and sat down. Oh, if Jim would only be kind to her when he was sober!

"Meggs was mad as thunder," he went on huskily, "an' as for Pete Kingsland—— Well, Ollie, Meggs put a flea in that feller's ear that'll keep 'im busy for a while."

"How?" asked Olive, perching her elbows on the table.

"Kingsland was raisin' hell because the bomb didn't bust up the Chain Works," Jim explained, "an' callin' me all kinds of names, when back comes Meggs an' he says, Meggs does, 'Jim ain't the only slacker, Kingsland. Where's all the boodle you been braggin' about? . . . Well, 'twon't be but a few days now, Ollie, when I'm done with Ithaca.'"

Done with Ithaca! Then he was going away. Olive hadn't known this. Where was he going, and what was he going to do?

"Take some more suds," was all she could think of to say.

Jim drank two more bottles of beer without winking a lid.

"That Pete Kingsland's a mangy brute," he broke out. "When a feller does dirt to 'is own father, it's 'bout the limit."

"So 'tis," replied Olive, breathlessly.

"Pete says the old man's crazy, an' what do you think, Ollie?"

She snapped the top from another bottle, leaned over and placed it in front of him.

"Don't think nothing," said she in an ugly voice.

"Want to sit on my lap?" hiccoughed Jim, lifting one shaking hand.

"Nein," grunted Olive. "It's too hot."

Shuckies spread out both arms and hands on the table.

"Pete Kingsland says his daddy's dippy," he maun-

dered on, "an' Doc Carmen says he ain't, an' Pete got a couple of young doctors from up near Union Springs to sign a paper the old man's off his nut. Pete's a big bag of wind, but he'll gimme a lot of money if I help 'im."

Judy crouching under the window outside stirred a little. It seemed as if she could not wait to hear what the Citizens of the World intended to do to her friend.

"If I had a boy like Pete Kingsland," Shuckies continued between hiccoughs, "I'd jump in the lake and drown myself. I'd do the world a good turn gettin' out of it, but before I went I'd squeeze the life out of what I was pappy to, I can tell you that!"

Outside Judy shuddered, and Olive opened another bottle of beer.

"Drink to Germany, Jim," she invited hoarsely.

Shuckies paid no attention to the girl's suggestion.

"Ollie, when I get the cash I'm goin' to buy you something pretty. . . . Think of gettin' a hundred dollars just for drivin' a man up the lake. When Carmen gets back, Pete'll be settin' in a butter tub, an' the Citizens'll have lots of money to work for the Fatherland."

The speaker's lids dropped over glazed eyes.

"When you goin' to take the poor, old duffer away, Jim?" queried Olive.

Jim swayed, smiled and put his hand in his pocket.

"See, Ollie," he observed drunkenly, "it's writ right there on that paper. Pete give it to me. . . . Gott im Himmel, but my head hurts so I can't read."

Olive took the paper from the man's shaking fingers.

"Let me read it," she said, holding it close to the light. "Gosh, Jim, but the old man hasn't got long to stay at home, has he now, if you take 'im a Monday next? Paper says you're to start from Kingsland Court at nine o'clock. Does that mean you're goin' to take 'im after dark?"

"Sure, donkey-clam," stuttered Shuckies. "It wouldn't be safe to take an old man what ain't any more crazy'n you are, Ollie, in the daytime, would it?"

"Monday next," repeated Olive, musingly, "nine o'clock . . . Well, then it won't be no use my bringin' any more beer here after Sunday, eh, Jim?"

"Bring it, old girl, all you can lay your hands on," grinned the man. "I'll drink it when I get back. . . . Get home now, I'm goin' to bed."

His head fell forward on the table, and he slept.

A distinct, rustling sound reached Olive from the direction of the window, and she limped across the room and peered out.

"Swipe the paper," came in a breath from the dark grass below.

Olive lowered the sash, picked up the paper Jim had shown her, turned out the light and crept softly away.

\* \* \* \* \*

"It was awful to get 'im so blind stavin'," wept Olive after they had gone to bed.

"'Twas so," admitted Judy, softly, "but you couldn't save 'im any other way."

They were silent a long time, each shaking with nerves.

"Ollie," whispered Judy.

"Ja, what?" sniffed Olive.

"I was going to tell you something, darlin'," murmured Judy, "an' I might as well now as any time, eh?"

"Ja, sure! . . . Go ahead!"

Judy's arms clasped the other girl tightly.

"When you get Jim for your man, honey," she whispered softly, "set down hard on 'is drinkin' so much beer. . . . It'd be awful if the baby's pappy'd have a hang-over every day."



## CHAPTER XXXV

### "AS GOD WILLS, MY SON"

If Peter Kingsland had been thrown into a bed of nettles, he could have felt no worse than he did the following Monday when he waited at the luncheon table for his son. The only consolation he had was that very soon he would be at peace. With the Kingsland funds in his hands, he could accomplish all he had promised Prussia and save Teddy from Judy Ketchel.

He had long ago banished any scruples about his father. In fact, as he twisted a spoon in his fingers, a smile sent the exquisitely curled mustache toward the bridge of his nose. His father was receiving back only what he had once given another. Retribution, Peter called it to himself.

Theodore's entrance into the dining room broke his tangled reverie in two. The blood pressed hard on his pulses at the thought that this boy was his, his very own. No wonder his teeth gleamed in welcome—no wonder he felt the world was his to play with as a child balances a rubber ball on his hands. . . . Teddy—Prussia, all the money a man could use—and no Judy Ketchel . . . everything to his liking!

"Sorry I kept you waiting, pater," excused Teddy, gravely.

"No matter, son," replied Peter, "although I confess I was a little anxious to know if you'd go to Auburn with me today." Wishing very much to dispel the troubled expression on his son's face, Peter went on, "I'd enjoy the trip hugely with you along. . . . Without you, well! of course I'll go, but——"

"Oh, I might as well go, as long as I can't see graddy," broke in Teddy. "And, pater, it does seem queer he

keeps so bowled over. My opinion is he hasn't been near so well since that Caldwell nurse came. She hasn't let me see him in four days, although graddy was always better after I'd been with him a while. She's not David's nurse, and I can't see why Miss Osmun went away. David'll raise a row when he gets back, I'll bet a nickel."

For the space of a few seconds, Peter ate silently. Then he said,

"I didn't approve of Miss Osmun, Theodore, and you must remember I haven't seen your grandfather, either."

"I do, of course, I do! But somehow it's different, pater. Graddy's always had me!"

"I'm his son, though," observed Peter.

"I wish we knew how Aunt Sarah is," said Teddy quickly, his desire to change the subject evident in his jerky tones.

"David'll tell us when he comes back," consoled Peter. "She's probably all right, or we'd have had a message. Your aunt's an excitable woman."

Teddy frowned.

"Dave might better've stayed with grandfather," he grumbled. "At any rate, he might have put off his visit to the New York Hospital 'til later."

An indulgent laugh fell from Peter's lips.

"The Kingsland household is but a small part of David's work, dear boy," said he.

"Oh, I understand that very well," returned Teddy, crossly, "but—graddy's—well, he's my grandfather, and he's sick. He's always had Dave, and he's always had me. . . . Now he hasn't anybody."

A bitter sneer dragged at Peter's lips.

"Not even Judy Ketchel," he scoffed with lowered lids.

"No! Not even Judy Ketchel," retorted Teddy, hotly. He got to his feet impatiently. "Peter, can't I just pop in and say good-bye to graddy?"

Peter made an impatient gesture with one of his beautiful hands.

"No, Theodore," he refused gently. "You heard what Doctor Mixer said—that your grandfather must remain quiet and not be disturbed."

Peter had risen too, and they stood for a moment looking at each other. Then Teddy shook himself.

"That's another thing I can't understand," he complained. "Dave leaves Doctor Munson to look after his patients, and suddenly instead of him, comes this Mixer. I don't like him any better than I do the Caldwell woman. . . . Well, I suppose you know best, but it's pretty tough on me."

He turned to go as Peter suggested,

"Better take your night things with you, son. We might not get back until tomorrow morning."

The boy swung back and eyed his father.

"Then I don't believe I'll go, pater, if you intend stopping over night," he said. "One of us ought to be here with——"

"Well, we'll come back if you feel that way," interjected Peter. "Probably I can finish my business in a couple of hours. Then we'll get dinner and run down this evening. . . . Come on, son dear. If we've got to make it tonight, we'd best be off a little early."

\* \* \* \* \*

At two o'clock the Kingsland touring car drew up to the stone steps, and Peter and Teddy stepped into it.

"We'll take the middle road, Benson," directed Peter, "and when you can, let out a bit."

As the great car glided noiselessly through the gateway, Peter looked back at the mansion standing there in the afternoon light, his heart throbbing with excitement. When he came into it again he would be master of it. He would be able to quiet Stein and Meggs, send Shuckies away from Ithaca with Judy Ketchel, and have all the money needed for the Society's work.

He looked brilliant and smiling, his thoughts busy with his numerous plans, though his lips twitched a little as he thought of David Carmen's return. But then, he reasoned, what was done at Kingsland Court really wasn't any of Carmen's affair. If, by any chance, the doctor made a fuss, he'd soon make him understand his position. This wouldn't be unpleasant at all for of late David had been a little too officious. Peter smiled again while he con-

jured up the things he'd fling upon any Ithacan who tried to meddle with his private business.

"You look happy today, pater," said Teddy, to open a conversation.

Peter leaned back contentedly.

"I am exceedingly so," he acknowledged. "God has been very good to me, son."

"I hope He helps graddy," mumbled the boy. Theodore was sorry by this time that he had consented to go to Auburn when his dear, old grandfather lay so ill at Kingsland Court, and he rather resented his father's solid contentment.

"He will," asserted Peter, promptly. Then looking directly into the boy's troubled, red-brown eyes, he quoted, "Ask and it shall be given you! Don't forget that, Ted."

Theodore made no answer to this, and for a long time after they had crossed the Fall Creek Bridge, they were silent.

"Have you thought much about that little talk I had with you the night I came home, Teddy?" queried Peter, after a spell.

Teddy made a little gesture of dismay.

"Yes, I have, pater, but the fact is, I can't see the thing just the way you do. I've tried to, but I can't! Every time I think of what—well, what you said about the teachings of Christ, I get so mad at the Germans, I can hardly hold myself from running off and enlisting."

A slow, smouldering rage grew within Peter Kingsland, but he restrained his sudden desire to speak with authority. Just as he was planning an argument the car turned a curve, and there, walking towards Ithaca, was Judy Ketchel.

Teddy's heart bounded. He leaned over and touched Benson.

"Slow up, Benny," he cried. "I want to get out."

Instantly Peter laid a detaining hand upon the boy's arm.

"I'd rather you wouldn't stop here, Theodore," he said curtly.

"I've got to!" was all Teddy said as he vaulted over the side of the car to the road.

Judy stopped as he ran to her side.

"I was just thinking of you," she murmured in confusion.

"And, by George, I was thinking about you the minute we came around that curve," the boy confessed.

A tremulous smile brought out two lovely dimples in the girl's face.

"I was hopin' to see you today," she said in a low voice. "'Spose your daddy'd mind if you walked just a bit with me this way?" She threw out her arm toward Ithaca.

"Of course not," ejaculated Teddy. "I was going to, anyhow."

He ran back to the automobile, and with nothing but an, "Excuse me a minute, father," to Peter, he told the chauffeur, "Run into the shade, Benson, I'll be back shortly."

Peter's face colored, and fury rose within him. Theodore hadn't as much as said, "Please, may I?"

"Wait three minutes by the clock, Ben," added the boy. "That's all." Teddy laughed, and the sound grated on Peter's ear.

"It's going to rain, Ted," he objected.

"Oh, not right away," laughed Teddy. "The sun's shining, and there isn't a cloud in sight."

Then without waiting for further excuses from his irate father, the boy went back to Judy.

"I guess your daddy hates me," she stated as they walked along side by side.

Teddy smiled into her upturned eyes.

"That's because he doesn't know you, dear," he assured her. "Nobody could dislike you very long, my Judy—sweet."

What wonderful words they were for her to hear! She desired to go over yonder and sit in the lengthening shadows, to listen while he told her all over again just how much he loved her. She flushed at the thought and paled at the one that followed like some evil thing—a thing she had to keep from him if she could.

"You're goin' to war," she burst out at length.

Gloom once more clouded Teddy's eyes.

"I want to!" he exclaimed. "Yes, I do want to, but my father says I can't yet." The young voice had grown sad during the last statement.

"But you said lots of times you'd go," insisted Judy, "an' I said right back, I said, I'd study hard 'til Germany got licked. 'Twas a promise, now wasn't it? I mean a real, honest to God promise."

Theodore studied the eager, lovely face turned up to his.

"I think perhaps it was," he conceded gravely.

"Then when you make a promise, don't you keep it?" demanded the girl. She didn't want to tell him about the wicked society his father might try to force him to join, but perhaps she'd have to. "A promise's a promise, ain't it?" she repeated, her voice rising.

"Surely! Yes, it is, Judy. I hadn't thought of our talk that way before." In Teddy's voice there was a ring of hope, and Judy Ketchel felt happier than she had in days.

They were now around the curve and out of sight of the Kingsland automobile, and there was about them but the broad fields, the white road winding away to Ithaca.

"Kiss me," commanded Teddy, coming to a stop beside her.

Judy looked up at him and shook her head.

"I'm never goin' to kiss you again," she vowed. "Never, never, if you don't do what you said you'd do!"

"You mean about—about enlisting?" Teddy questioned.

Judy's curly head nodded emphatically.

"Yes, you promised me, an' if you don't keep that one how'd I know you'd ever keep any word you said to me?"

A line appeared between Teddy's brows. He hadn't expected Judy to take any such stand.

"I'll try and explain, sweetheart," he began. "You see, my father——"

"Fathers haven't a thing to do with us," she interrupted. "I ain't goin' to marry your father, an' you ain't goin' to marry none of the Ketchels but me. . . ."



This is just between you an' I! See? What you said you'd do, an' what I said I'd do, ought to be done. Now ain't I right?"

Then as if a strong hand had picked it up, the load lifted from Teddy's heart. Of course, "A promise is a promise." Even Peter couldn't gainsay that! All the past dreary weeks of waiting were as if they had not been. Theodore Kingsland was a free man once more. He flung up his red head in giant defiance of any one who dared say he shoudn't keep his given word. By the very expression on his face, Judy knew once again she'd beaten the Citizens of the World.

"An' I'm goin' to have some shoes too," she boasted. "There! . . . Now, mebbe, now you'll promise me over again."

Teddy's pulses were beating against his cuffs—rapid, little hammer taps.

"I'll do it, if—if—you'll kiss me," he offered, flushing.

Judy stood on tiptoes and puckered up her lips. The load had rolled from her heart too.

"I'd love to," was all she said.

Teddy drew her into the shade, and there, shielded from every eye, he kissed her not once but twice, three times, many times.

"There," he said passionately, "there, little Judy, on those kisses I renew my promise. . . . I'll go and fight the Germans the minute the government'll take me."

Still afraid of the Citizens of the World, Judy wanted even more assurance.

"An' nobody can make you change your mind?" she persisted.

Teddy's laugh rang out.

"Not a soul, Judy! No, not a person in the world! In just a little while, honey sweet, I'll be all dolled up in a uniform."

Judy drew a long breath, and the menacing shadow of Germany faded from above that beloved, red head.

"You'll be awful beautiful," she breathed.

At that moment, a whistle came sharply to them.

"That's the pater," exclaimed Teddy, "and he's in a

hurry. . . . We're going to Auburn. . . . What do you say to meeting me tomorrow about seven just beyond McKinney's, sweetheart?"

Oh, to be able to say, "Sure, tomorrow!"

"I don't know as I can," she answered slowly. "But, mebbe. . . . Go 'long now. There's your daddy whistling again."

She swept by him and hurried away toward Ithaca.

Peter's broad brow was lined with anger as he swung open the door for his son to enter the car, but he made no remark save to order Benson to drive on.

They were well on their way to Auburn before Teddy ventured to look at his father.

"Pater," he said suddenly, "I can't join your Society, and I'm going to enlist. The fact is, I'd forgotten I'd promised Judy Ketchel I would. . . . I hope you don't mind too much."

Peter brought forth his mighty will and gripped at the fury that almost choked him.

"That'll be as God wills, son dear," was the reply he made. Then later by a few seconds, he remarked smoothly, "Perhaps it won't rain after all."

## CHAPTER XXXVI

### "HE WILL CARRY YOU THROUGH"

AT four o'clock in the afternoon, Judy Ketchel reached Kingsland Court and crouched down in a clump of trees opposite the huge gates, considering the best way to approach the house. She had made a plan in her busy little brain; just how to carry it out was more than she could fathom. She had to see Senator Kingsland, but, from what Olive had told her, he was surrounded with enemies. Yet Judy was used to enemies—German enemies at that! How devotedly thankful she was for two things! The first—she had her little, red Bible right in her pocket, near enough that at any time her fingers might touch it. The second—Peter Kingsland was gone! She wanted to stay there in the shade and rest, to listen to the birds in the trees, to hear the tapping of the leaves against each other that told her wonder-tales of red-brown hair and passionate, red-brown eyes.

However, to loll away her time while her friend needed her would never do, so after close inspection for prying eyes, she slipped into the garden of Kingsland Court and was instantly lost in the shrubbery. Around and around the garden she crept, darting from bush to tree, from tree to bush, gradually nearing that massive structure that stood a solid monument to the name of Kingsland.

It must have taken Judy fully half an hour to reach the vine-covered arbor at the south of the house. In the thickness of the bushes alongside it, she squatted down. She knew all the servants had been sent away, but those other people from up near Union Springs—the doctor—the nurse——.

Just then a voice broke sharply the silence of the garden. "Oh, Heavens, don't worry so, Miriam! He's asleep, I tell you, and not a person can get near him." It was a man's tones that jarred on Judy's sensitive senses like the filing of a saw.

"I drugged the old man so he'll be quiet for hours—Lord! but it's hot!"

Judy forgot all about the brown eyes shot with red, forgot everything but that some one was speaking of her friend. She crouched lower into the vines, scarcely daring to breathe.

"It's a dirty trick," a woman's voice replied fretfully.

"Well, so 'tis," the man took up, "but it's none of our business, is it? All we've got to do is to follow instructions."

"I know it," sighed the other. "Oh! darling, I do loathe this kind of work so!"

After the lapse of several tense seconds, Judy heard the sound of a kiss and, as if that kiss from the arbor were the sign she waited for, she started to crawl along toward the house until she was near the long flight of stone steps. Up this she climbed, and turning the handle of the door, she pushed her way in. In the spacious hall, she halted with lifted head, her breath hissing through her lips as she listened. The house was silent as a tomb. Then she fled up the stairs and walked straight into Senator Kingsland's chamber. His eyes were closed, and his thin, white face gave Judy a shock in its sharp contrast to the reds and browns of the room.

She went forward hastily. Passionate, hot tears rose suddenly to her eyes as she noted how evilly his enemies had wasted him away since last she'd seen him.

"God save him from the Germans," came in a whisper from her lips.

Then she bent over and shook him violently.

Kingsland's heavy lids lifted with effort, and seeing her he smiled.

"So they let you come? I'm glad!" he murmured dreamily, and immediately he was asleep again.

Fiercely, Judy glanced about the room. On the table was a glass of water and she lifted it swiftly, throwing the contents over the pallid face on the pillow.

"Wake up," she said between set teeth. "Don't sleep!" They're goin' to take you to a batty house today."

Kingsland gave a long sigh.

"I know it," he mumbled.

Slipping one arm under his head, Judy Ketchel raised him up.

"But they won't!" she gasped. "I say they won't. Wake up! . . . There! . . . I've come to save you. . . . Now, for God's sake don't go to sleep. . . . Sit up!"

By sheer main force, she pulled the long thin legs to the floor.

"Oh, goodest Jesus, don't—let him—wobble so!" she prayed with swift-rising tears.

The broken, intense prayer sank into Kingsland's benumbed consciousness. He straightened up, Judy holding him fast in her arms.

"You want to go away with them other folks, eh?" she demanded passionately. "You're crazy, is that it?"

A feeble shake of the gray head almost overbalanced the swaying figure.

"No, only Peter—says I—I have to," came frothily to Judy.

"And I say you won't," she gritted. "Now, get out of the bed."

In the past few weeks Senator Kingsland had been so used to obeying orders that in spite of the desire to sleep and his dizziness, he stumbled up.

"I'm goin' to get you out, darlin'," said Judy, "but I can't if you go to sleep again."

Senator Kingsland braced himself against her.

"Where's Teddy?" he dribbled.

"His daddy's took him off," replied the girl. "There ain't any one but me to help you, so come along. . . . Say, do you know the way down back where your maids go?"

"Yes," murmured Kingsland, his head whirling.

Judy noted the glazed eyes, the drooping lids.

"Come on, then!" she insisted. "Here! . . . If you stagger like that again I'll pinch you."

Her strong young fingers grasped hold of the flesh of Senator Kingsland's arm, and he stood bolt upright instantly.

"That hurt," he whimpered.

"I meant it to hurt!" shivered Judy, blinded with tears, "and what's more, I'll do it again. You're doped! . . . Now! that's a nice, honey! . . . So! . . . There! . . . Lean on me and walk!"

Slowly, she led him out of the room and for a moment they stood in the great corridor, the girl's eyes searching for the servant's stairs.

"We got to go down the back way," she told him. "Oh, Lordy! Don't wobble about so, you'll fall."

"I'm sick," moaned Kingsland.

The loving young arm around his waist pressed him along.

"But I'm goin' to hold you," she encouraged. "There! . . . We're right to the stairs!"

Kingsland slipped from the girl's arm and sank down at the top of the long flight.

"I can't walk," he groaned feebly.

Judy's lovely white face bent close to his, and yellow curls hung in profusion over his long frame.

"You got to walk, you just got to!" she exclaimed. "I can't carry you! . . . I would if I could. . . . Honey man, don't you want to do something for me?"

With all his might, Kingsland grappled with the deadening thing in his brain. He'd heard her words and sensed them dimly.

"Yes, yes," he sighed, "but——"

"Then stand up," breathed Judy. "It ain't so awful far to where I'm takin' you."

"I can't! . . . Oh, God help me—some!"

Judy considered the drooping old figure a second, the dear eyes which had lost all their color, the face gray with what she feared was the hue of death. Then she squatted down beside him, her heart thumping until she could hear it. Into her mind came the thought of Denny, how she had forced him to silence, how he had been rescued from the Germans.

"If they find us goin' away they'll beat us," she hissed. "You don't want that!"

Kingsland shuddered.

"I couldn't bear it," he muttered, his head sinking to



his chest. "Everybody's gone away who could help me."

"I'm here," whispered Judy.

Both her arms encircled the swaying old man.

"An' what's more," she ran on, "if you don't help me a little I can't do nothing for you. . . . Now're you goin' to do it, huh?"

Kingsland stood up.

"I will," he said, setting his teeth.

"Then put your feet down careful like," she pleaded, drawing a thankful breath. "Hang to me, an' don't slip! . . . That's right! Now, down! . . . An' down! . . . An' down!"

She tolled off each step as the shuffling feet lifted and fell, and at the bottom of the flight she opened the door. The large kitchen was a pink of neatness, and no human being was in sight. Judy led the old man across the room, and out into the shadowy grape arbor.

It was a long stretch to walk to the servants' gate for a man filled with drugs, but Kingsland made it, holding himself as erect as he could.

The gate was unlatched and Judy lifted her foot and kicked it wide open. In front of them was the wide, white road over which they had to travel. Would the man and woman making love in the vine-arbor see them?

"Honey," she said gravely, "while I'm helpin' you across the road will you just say over some things I'll tell you?"

Kingsland nodded drearily.

"Say just this," returned Judy, swiftly. "Look ever to Jesus, an' He'll carry you through. . . . I'll say it an' you say it. We're goin' to them thick bushes right over there. Begin now. . . . Start in! . . . Look ever to Jesus——"

Judy pushed him through the gate.

"Say it," she commanded.

"Look ever to Jesus," mouthed Kingsland. Then he swayed dizzily, but Judy's voice came to him through the frightful ringing in his ears, "an' He will carry you through," she said.

"He will carry you through!" repeated Kingsland like

a parrot, and then the man and girl stepped to the macadam.

Across the road they staggered slowly, Kingsland muttering over the words Judy's low, insistent voice was pronouncing. As they reached the heavy bushes, the girl looked back. The Kingsland mansion glistened magnificently there in the sunshine.

In another moment, the trees and heavy shrubs blotted out the road, and finally the great house was also lost to sight.

By this time they had covered some distance, and Judy felt thrillingly happy as they neared the enormous thicket leading to the Ithaca Cemetery. She drew the shaking man to a little path running into the brushwood.

"Now duck," she gurgled. "Slide right in here. Double up an' get along!" and Kingsland, sighing, whispered, "He will carry you through," and fell into the bushes.

Judy Ketchel bent over him, pallid with the winged thought that he had died. He was breathing heavily, his lids half-closed over uprolled eyes. With her scarlet underlip held tightly between her teeth, she gave him another, dreadful pinch.

"You mustn't go to sleep," she flung out. "Now, listen, while I ask you something!"

The man's set eyes stared at her. Sometimes he remembered who she was, sometimes not. Judy cupped his damp face with her two warm hands.

"You believe the Bible, don't you, honey man?" she asked him, swallowing hard.

"Yes!" he moaned, "but—I—I feel so sick!"

The girl thrust her hand into her pocket. Bringing it out, she held up the little, red Bible, her throat throbbing with love for him.

"It's a blessed book an'll help you, sir," she managed to say. "Here, hold it tight in your hand!"

Kingsland clutched at the red speck that danced before his eyes, and his weak old fingers closed around it.

"There!" soothed Judy. "Just creep along with me."

Senator Kingsland, holding in a death grip Donald Ricardo's Bible, and the bare-footed girl, her feet pierced

by thorns, her curls catching in the brambles, edged onward.

"You're doin' fine, sir," she commended as Kingsland stopped, panting for breath, "an' mebbe in a little while you can sleep. . . . But not yet."

And again they proceeded slowly.

When Judy led him into the shadows of the Ithaca Cemetery, Kingsland, too drugged to notice where they were going, paid no attention as they struggled over graves, through private lots and then into a long road, dividing the cemetery, north from south. Judy's heart suddenly leapt to her throat. There drawn up at the roadside, just beyond them, was Sliver Jim's wagon, and his bony, old horse nibbling at the green grass. On the seat was Olive, her thin little figure bent almost double while her fingers held loosely to the reins. Ah! she might have known Olive wouldn't have failed her!

She trilled shrilly, and the lame girl climbed out of the wagon, her face puckered into a dark frown.

"Come help me, Ollie," gasped Judy, huskily. "I'm about dead beat out."

Olive pursed up her lips in terror! Nevertheless, she stationed herself beside Senator Kingsland.

"If Jim ever finds this out, Jude——" she began in a halting whisper.

Judy's arm tightened about the frail old man.

"He won't, Ollie, he can't!" she exclaimed. "I got my friend, but he's near dead with dope. . . . Now then, help me drag him up in the wagon."

But Judy Ketchel hadn't reckoned on the collapse that overtook Senator Kingsland within sight of the promised land—a promised land that consisted of a springless wagon, a lame girl, and far off to the north the Garden of Glory. He slid quietly to the ground, and lay there a thin, crumpled figure in the road, the little red Bible hanging loosely in his hand. Judy slipped the book back into her pocket and glanced about. The graveyard was silent, save for the birds twittering in the trees and the squirrels chattering to each other.

"We've got to lug him in that cart somehow," she

stated moodily. "He ain't a mite of strength left."

"An' he's too big a duffer to lift," whined Olive, "but I've seen Jim let the wagon down when he's rakin' stuff out of it. Mebbe we can do that, Jude!"

"Then let it down, an' be quick about it," said Judy.

It took several minutes to lower the back end of the wagon to the ground. Then between them the two girls dragged the heavy, sleeping body of Ithaca's famous Senator into it.

"Cover him with that horse blanket," said Olive, pointing to a dirty, rumpled cloth. "It's the best Sliver has. I told him me an' you was goin' for some stuff for grandpap."

After spreading the blanket over the sleeping Kingsland, Judy lifted his head into her lap and sat down. Carefully she covered the white face with her skirt.

"Now drive on, Ollie dear," she said, her voice full of tears. "Drive slow an' get to the lake road the quickest way you can."

Without a word, Olive took up the reins and away they went. Automobiles passed them, filled with happy, laughing people, but no one noticed the two girls as they drove along with their sleeping load to the lakeside.

Once within sight of the Garden of Glory, Judy felt a sinking at her heart. She had to explain to Honor and, oh, how she wished David Carmen were in Ithaca! She lifted her skirt and looked at Kingsland's face. His brow was beaded with sweat and she wiped it off tenderly.

"Hurry along, Ollie!" she gasped. "He looks like something dead. Can you get up the hill?"

"Ja!" grunted Olive. "I'll drive around the back."

From the window, Honor saw the rickety old wagon draw up to her back door. Then she caught sight of Judy and Olive Ketchel. Instantly, the former clambered out of the wagon and ran into the house.

"I've got to speak a minute to you, mam," she said, and as she looked up into Mrs. Lessington's face, tears welled the blue eyes full.

"Child!" exclaimed Honor, "what's happened? Your grandfather——"

"He's all right," broke in Judy, "but some one else is awful sick. . . . Please help me like you did with Denny!"

"I will, of course, I will! Oh, little Judy, you do look so tired. . . . Sit down!"

The yellow head shook in negation.

"I can't now!" said Judy. "Wait 'til I tell you. . . . Please, mam, don't say——"

She didn't need to finish her appeal. Honor's startled eyes were full of loving sympathy. Judy's fingers locked and interlocked as she told her friend of her discovery—and sobbingly stated the fact that David Carmen had been sent to New York purposely that Roderick Kingsland might be made way with while he was gone.

"They're makin' out he's crazy, mam," she said brokenly, "that his wits are went, but they ain't."

Mrs. Lessington nodded.

"Yes, I know, dear," she said. "David told me! . . . Mr. Peter Kingsland asked Doctor Carmen to have him committed to an asylum, but David insisted the Senator only needed rest—that he would be all right if he were left alone."

"So he would," gasped Judy. "An' that's why I lugged him here, mam. . . . He's out in Jim's old cart. . . . Can we bring 'im in?"

Honor gazed horrified into the appealing face. Then in helpless wonder she went out and looked at the man asleep in the wagon. A feeling of thanksgiving swept over her at the thought that David Carmen would be home that night. Only a little while ago she'd received his telegram.

"He's sound asleep, isn't he?" she whispered, bending over, "and he looks so terribly ill."

"He's doped stiff, that's what he is!" returned Judy, almost mechanically, "but we've got to get him to bed. . . . Here, I'll wake 'im up."

Kingsland opened his eyes wearily as Judy lifted his head.

"Teddy," he driveled.

"This ain't Teddy!" she murmured very low, her face growing scarlet at repeating that best-loved name.



"You're goin' to bed now! . . . Jump down, Ollie, an' help Miss Lessington an' me to get him out on the grass."

Between Honor and Judy Ketchel, Kingsland staggered into the house. While he slept a consultation was held where best to put him until David returned.

"Please, mam, let's take him upstairs in the back room," pleaded Judy. "No one'll find him up there."

It took quite fifteen minutes to get the drugged old man up the stairs and into bed. Then he fell asleep, and Honor followed by the two girls went downstairs.

"Oh, dear," sighed Mrs. Lessington, sitting down limply. "I don't know what David will say tonight when he comes home. . . . It's perfectly dreadful!"

Judy's tired face wreathed in a smile.

"Oh, he won't say nothin'," she flashed in answer. "He'll just go to work. I know him! There won't be any crazy house for that good man upstairs when Doc Carmen comes home."

"No, of course not," agreed Honor. "He's been devoted to him for years."

"An' Ollie here," Judy took up, flinging her hand toward her cousin, "she's kind a half sick too." She paused, leaned her chin on her palm and trailed on wearily, "I thought, mam, if you'd just put your arms'around her like you have me sometimes she'd feel better."

The lame girl lifted her haggard face, and her gaze and Honor's met for a moment. Then Mrs. Lessington opened her arms and Olive fled into them as a small, hurt thing goes to a friend.

"I got to take back Jim's wagon," Olive breathed after a while. "Can I come again some time, mam?"

"Yes, every day if you like, Olive dear," Honor smiled faintly, "and now, darling, you mustn't cry any more. . . . Of course, you won't tell any one Senator Kingsland is here."

"Ollie never tells anything," thrust in Judy, getting up and kissing her cousin. "Get along home now, honey, old girl, an' say a thank you to Jim for the wagon."



## CHAPTER XXXVII

### WHERE IS SENATOR KINGSLAND?

MEANTIME, while Judy Ketchel was dragging her friend to safety, the doctor and nurse at Kingsland Court were still in the arbor. The young woman had signs of tears on her face, and the doctor was walking up and down, his hands thrust deep into his white trousers pockets.

"I simply can't stay in Union Springs any longer, Harry," said the girl. "It's a criminal place! There isn't a person there any more crazy than you or I."

"That's true, Miriam, but it's not our fault, you can see that," replied the doctor, coming to a halt before her. "Well, I promise after this job's over we'll both leave."

"And you'll set up in a practice for yourself, Harry dear?" she asked.

"Yes! But perhaps it'll be difficult at first——"

"But I don't care about that," came in quick interruption. "Anything, rather than what we're doing. . . . I wish we could help this poor, old man some way."

The doctor's lips set firmly.

"We can't, though, my dear!" he flung out. "Peter Kingsland is determined, and if our place refused to take him he'd get some one else, that's all. . . . We're safe enough because we've got the Court papers."

"They're wicked papers," Miss Caldwell shot back. "And they're so mean to those poor patients up there!"

"But you're not, dear! That's what made me first love you. You were so gentle and sweet. . . . Now, in this case, the only one I really feel sorry for outside of the patient is that grandson of his. His father's pulled the wool over his eyes in a dastardly way."

"It's all a piece off the same cloth!" returned the girl. "I feel for that boy, too, and he simply hates the sight of us both." She shuddered and sighed. "As beautiful

as this place is, I've grown to despise it in the past four days."

"Never mind," soothed her companion, "you'll be away soon. I think I'll run in and take a peep at him! . . . And then we'll eat something. I'm hungry."

At almost the same minute that Judy Ketchel guided her friend into the tree-shadowed cemetery, Doctor Mixer and Nurse Caldwell walked around to the front of the house and strolled slowly up the steps.

"You needn't go up, sweetheart," he smiled, and the girl returning his caress went on into the dining room where a dainty spread had been left in readiness for them. Slowly, she drew two chairs up to the table, and then placed her hot face against a bunch of roses around which glistened solid silver and heavy cut glass. She was in this attitude when the door burst open.

"He's gone," gasped Doctor Mixer, wax-white.

The nurse's startled face came from among the roses.

"Gone," she echoed, "but he can't be! . . . Why, good Heavens, he couldn't have walked away!"

"But I've searched every possible place!" was the sharp retort. "He's gone, I tell you. . . . Miriam, for mercy's sake don't stand there staring at me that way! . . . Come and help me look him up."

\* \* \* \* \*

David Carmen stepped from the Delaware and Lackawanna train, angry with himself, angry with Peter, and even more angry with Sarah Kingsland. That he should have been called to New York for a spell of female hysterics was more than his professional spirit could tolerate.

The first person that he encountered when he came along the platform was Judy Ketchel. She ran up to him eagerly, and the man's heart bounded at the sight of her.

"Mrs. Lessington——" he broke forth.

Judy raised on her tiptoes.

"Oh, she's fine," she interrupted in a low voice. "But I'm in a hell of a scrape!"

David laughed.

"That's nothing new, little Judy," he smiled. "What's the matter now?"

"Can you go to the Garden of Glory with me right this minute?" she queried.

Could he go to the Garden of Glory! Hadn't that precious garden and its lovely mistress been in his mind all the time he'd been gone! Hadn't the thought that he was coming back to Honor allayed his bitterness somewhat at being called to New York for nothing!

"Did Mrs. Lessington say for me to come tonight?" he asked eagerly.

"Sure, she sure did!" flashed back Judy. "We've got something to tell you!"

"Wait a minute, I'll get a taxi," said David, abruptly. "Stand by my suit case and I'll come back in a second."

On their way up the lakeside Doctor Carmen put question after question to the girl.

"You're quite certain Mrs. Lessington is well?" he demanded.

"Yes, an' she's beautifuller'n ever," sighed Judy.

"And Denny—it isn't Denny?"

At the thought of the little boy growing strong, "like a horse," in the country, Judy laughed.

"I guess the kid's fillin' up on milk 'til he most busts," was her reply.

"Then your grandfather——" hesitated Carmen.

"Oh, he's the same old German as ever," Judy cut in.

"But say, I told you back there, an' I tell you now to wait a spell. Mrs. Lessington's got a bit of news for you."

A little later at the House of Mystery, Judy went softly up the stairs, Doctor Carmen following her. The hasty greetings from the woman he was to marry, the solemn faces of both Honor and the girl from Rogues' Harbor had forced him to believe that something quite out of the ordinary had happened.

"Go upstairs with Judy," Honor had said, and something in her tones made him turn sharply away.

The room in which he had first found Denny Ketchel was shaded by drawn lace curtains. He glanced toward the bed.

"There he is," Judy said simply. "Now do something for him!"

Doctor Carmen went to the bedside, and for a long moment stared down on the pallid, sleeping face of Senator Kingsland.

"He's been doped," continued Judy. "See what you can do for him, an' then come along downstairs, an' I'll tell you what I know."

Carmen placed his fingers on the pulse of his friend. The figure on the bed didn't stir, nor did the man's eyes open.

"For God's sake, how'd he come here," David gasped, white-lipped.

"Is he goin' to get well?" breathed Judy.

A large lump came up in Carmen's throat. The sight of any other person in the world wouldn't have been such a shock to him.

"We'll go downstairs, and then tell me about it," he said with a grim setting of his teeth. He looked very stern as he came into the sitting room, and Honor's eyes sought his deprecatingly.

"Sit down, David dear," she said. "Isn't it perfectly dreadful?"

"Where's his family?" asked Carmen in a low voice. "Where's Peter? . . . Where's Teddy?"

For a spell no one answered him. He looked so grave Judy Ketchel was growing more frightened with each passing moment. Then Mrs. Lessington made a gesture toward her.

"Let Judy tell it. She knows it better than I do," she said.

Carmen's face grew frowningly forbidding. That the richest man in Tompkins County had been taken away from his home, drugged to unconsciousness, needed many explanations.

"Where's Teddy Kingsland?" he repeated, looking at the girl.

"Gone on a trip like you went," replied Judy, her voice filled with emotion. "That Pete sent you away a purpose to get that poor old thing upstairs put in a dippy house. But I wouldn't stand for it, so I stole him an' brought him here."

Then like a flash it all overwhelmed Carmen. He dropped his head in his hands, and a tense silence fell over the three.

Suddenly he flung up his head.

"But they couldn't put him in an insane asylum without authority," he got out in desperation.

"They got that all right," nodded Judy. "They had papers made up the minute you went away, an' a young mutt in white clothes callin' himself a doctor an' kissin' a pretty nurse was to take 'im up the lake tonight." A little smile came about the tremulous lips. "I wonder what them two duckies said when they found him gone."

"But Teddy, surely he——" commenced Carmen.

Judy waved him to silence.

"He didn't know anything about it, so don't lay no blame on him. His pappy took him off to Auburn, tellin' him his graddy were too sick to see him. The kid was awful mad because you went to New York—said you ought to a been here."

"That's true too," sighed David. "But, Judy, listen to me. Of course, you know very well, both of you," his burning gaze took in the silent, white woman and the girl, "I wouldn't have gone if I——"

Honor went to him and touched the head that had suddenly sunk between two shaking hands. Judy too crept forward.

"We know that, you good man," she whispered. "That's why I brought you here quick. There'll be the devil to pay at Kingsland Court when Mr. Red-headed Peter gets back."

"And he's the poor, old man's only son," groaned Carmen. "Begin and tell me all you know, Judy."

After the thrilling tale was finished, Honor asked,

"Are you going to tell them Senator Kingsland's here?"

David shook his head.

"Not yet! No! not yet!" He got up and strode up and down the room. "What a devilish thing it was to treat him so."

"So 'twas," retorted Judy, "an' I'm awful glad you're goin' to keep mum, sir."



A sudden resolve took possession of David Carmen.

"I'm going to Kingsland Court now," he told them. "But I'll be back as soon as I can. . . . Don't disturb the Senator. . . . Let him sleep."

"Oh, he won't stir yet a while! Why, I had to pinch him to make him mind," and Judy groaned in remembrance. "It was just like pinchin' Denny."

David Carmen took hold of her hands.

"You've done a brave—a very brave thing, little Judy," he said somberly. "If he lives, he'll thank you."

Purple, mist-laden eyes glanced upward.

"I love him," murmured Judy. "I just love him heaps, an' I'll love him forever an' ever."



When Sliver Jim crept to the back door of Kingsland Court, Doctor Mixer met him. Shuckies made to step into the kitchen, but the other man barred the way.

"We're not going out tonight, my man," Mixer told the German. "So you might as well go back where you came from."

Shuckies stared and scowled and thrust his hands into his pockets.

"Then don't I get my money, mister," he demanded importantly. "Where's my hunderd dollars?"

"You'll not get a cent from me!" drawled the doctor in an ugly tone. "If we want you—well, I suppose, Mr. Kingsland'll send for you. . . . Good night."

About an hour after Shuckies went away, leaving Mixer and the nurse in sober silence, Peter Kingsland and his son drove into Kingsland Court. The lighted house caused Peter's heart to bound in apprehension. According to the schedule he'd made, the place should be dark. In fact, all the way from Auburn, Peter had rehearsed to himself the explanation he was going to make to Theodore. For an instant, he thought it wise to take his son away again, but that plan he dismissed. He must know what was going on inside—what Mixer had done or what he was going to do.

"Benson," he said, leaning forward, "drive down to Doctor Carmen's office." Then Peter turned back to his



son. "If he's there, Ted, ask about your aunt. If he's not home find out when they expect him."

"You bet I will, and I know Dave'll let me see graddy tonight," answered Teddy. "But we might telephone, pater, and he'd come up."

"No, go down," said Peter, roughly. "I'd rather you would."

Until the last sound of the motor car left his ears, Peter stood in silent meditation. Then drawing in a quick breath, he ran up the steps just as Doctor Mixer suddenly opened the door.

Peter's face went white, and the doctor's expression startled a German oath from his lips.

"What's happened?" he demanded breathlessly.

Mixer's hands came up in a gesture of terror.

"He's gone!" he groaned. "He's been gone for hours!"

"Gone!" cried Peter. "Gone where!"

He strode into the dining room, rage, hate and dull, sickening fear struggling within him. At the sight of him, Miriam Caldwell got up, but her nerves were shaking so, she fell back again. Mixer, following close on Peter's heels, made the girl steadily choke down the hysterical cry that rose to her lips.

In the center of the room, Peter flung around on the doctor.

"Where is—Senator Kingsland?" he gritted.

"We don't know," confessed Mixer, quaking before the burning red-brown eyes. "Someone must have taken him away. . . . He couldn't have gone alone, for he was drugged."

In a few sentences, he told the story, and as he talked beads of perspiration broke out upon Peter's brow.

"Has anyone been here," he snapped. "Did you let any one in?"

"Not a soul," interpolated the nurse.

"Then he can't be gone," thundered Peter. "Great God, Mixer! Are you trying to put something over thinking you'll get more money? It's some sort of a blackmailing scheme. . . . So!"

Horror leapt into Miriam Caldwell's eyes, and indig-

nant denials came not only from her but the rigid doctor at her side. Before Peter had time to make further demands a loud peal of the front bell shot through the house.

"My son, perhaps," he ejaculated. "Sit tight—let me do the talking, if there's any to be done!"

David Carmen stepped into the hall when Peter Kingsland opened the door. He looked dreadfully pale, and Peter took note of the grim, stern-set mouth, the broad shoulders and the relentless, steady stare David fixed upon him.

"I thought I'd run in, Peter," he remarked in a deep voice, "and let you know Sarah's all right, and—and just have a look at your father. . . . I couldn't get Munson on the 'phone, and I felt worried."

"Come into the library," answered Peter, sullenly.

The library door slammed with a bang behind the two men, and Peter stood eyeing his companion.

"Sarah wasn't sick at all," Carmen said at length. "A spell of hysterics, which didn't amount to anything. I had my journey for nothing, it seems."

Peter's cigarette case fell from his hand as he took it from his pocket. When he stooped to pick it up, David saw a shudder run over the big frame, but he could find no sympathy in his heart for Peter Kingsland.

"I'm going upstairs now," he announced with curt decision. "I've another very sick patient and may have to sit up all night."

Kingsland's fingers shook the flame of a lighted match far from the end of the cigarette he held between his lips. Then he blew out the match and dropped the cigarette suddenly.

"Wait, Dave!" he said jerkily. "I want to talk to you." And Dave waited.

In silence Peter walked to the window and glanced out into the gloom of the garden. With as much deliberation as he could summon, he came back again, picked up the cigarette and lighted it.

"The fact is, Dave," he spoke slowly, holding the cigarette aloft in his white fingers, "I don't want to offend you——"

"Offend me—how?" interrupted Carmen.

Peter sent forth several beautiful gray rings of smoke, watching each one as it drifted away.

"My father wasn't doing as well as he might, you know, Dave," he said abruptly, "and I called in another doctor. . . . I didn't care for Munson.

"Oh!" observed David.

"As I said, old man," went on Peter, "I don't want any offence taken, but naturally I had to do what I thought best for my father."

David's eyes went to the floor.

"You discharged Munson, and have another physician in the house?" he asked without raising his head.

"Yes," drawled Peter.

"And this other man—he knew your father was my patient?" queried Carmen.

An ash fell from Peter's cigarette, and his eyes watched it as it drifted downward. He was quite cool in appearance now.

"Yes, of course, I told him that," he answered at last.

David cleared his throat. He wanted very much to knock Peter flat with one swift punch of his fist.

"And this doctor, Peter?" he said huskily. "I can see him, I suppose? You know, Pete, your father's a very old friend of mine, and while I don't want to interfere, friendship gives me the right to talk this thing over with—your—your——"

Peter uttered an exclamation something like an oath. David raised a pair of blazing eyes.

"I wish to see him, sir!" he said grimly. "Instantly!"

"The doctor, or my father?" and Peter's question was tinged with sarcasm.

He fell back as David strode toward him, and an expression very much like fear leapt into his face. David noticing it, laughed roughly.

"The doctor, of course!" he snapped, his teeth coming together and gritting as they touched. "It's not up to me to thrust myself on a patient who doesn't want my attention."

"Then I'll bring Mixer in here," responded Peter, shortly.

"All right," acquiesced David, flinging about. "Go get him!"

Doctor Mixer wished himself anywhere else as David Carmen centered his angry eyes full upon him. His spine felt as if drops of cold water were running down it. He made no effort to speak, nor did he leave Peter's side.

"Mr. Kingsland here," and Carmen motioned outward with his hand, "tells me you have charge of his father."

"Yes, I was called in," Mixer undertoned limply.

"And Senator Kingsland—he's better, eh?"

David's voice was hoarse and Mixer's eyes sought Peter's. The almost imperceptible nod of the red head gave the little doctor renewed courage.

"Oh, yes!" he returned. "Yes, he's doing nicely now! I changed his medicine, and we've hopes he'll be up in a day or two!"

At that moment, David Carmen blessed Judy Ketchel fervently. Never should these two smug scoundrels know where the master of Kingsland Court was if he could prevent it.

"And Ted," he queried, looking at Peter. "I suppose if I can't see your father, I might talk a while to him."

A fierce light glowed in Peter's eyes.

"He's out now," he growled. "Tomorrow, perhaps, he'll come down and see you."

"Then good night," answered David. "My regard to Senator Kingsland."

Infinite relief surged a smile to Peter's lips. He hadn't expected to get rid of the officious David quite so easily. He held out his hand, but seemingly Carmen didn't notice it.

"Good night, doctor," David threw back over his shoulder, as he walked to the door, "and success to your new case."

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

### CLEANING OUT A MUSS

DAVID CARMEN turned his car into the lake-road the maddest man in Tompkins County. He was going back to the House of Mystery with all speed. And what was more, every minute only added to his resolution to keep from the Kingsland family the whereabouts of the Senator, at least, until the old man was once more able to take care of himself—able and capable to deal with his arrogant son without fear. He smiled grimly as he remembered Peter's effort to banish him from Kingsland Court in an offhand manner.

A big touring car was coming toward him from the Salt works, and the state of the road in reconstruction caused Carmen to draw up to the hill-side to allow it to pass. He was too busy with his thoughts to bother about the occupants of the other automobile, and in another moment it would flash by on its way to Ithaca. Much to his surprise the great machine drew up alongside and stopped.

"Hello, Dave," shouted a voice, and Carmen instantly recognized Theodore Kingsland.

David didn't want to talk to Teddy then. He loved the lad, of course, and while memories of Judy's words and Honor's sweetness had softened his anger somewhat, he knew that if he told the boy the truth, his present chance to help his old friend would be snatched away from him. Again remembering his detestation of Peter, he made a gruff reply to another shout from Teddy, who by this time had vaulted to the ground and was striding toward him.

"I went over to your house, Dave," said Theodore, "but the folks told me you'd been home, got your runabout and gone again."

The boy placed both hands on Carmen's car door and leaned over in a friendly way.

"Say, Dave," he went on, "the pater wants you to come to the Court. . . . So do I. . . . You've got to clean out a muss up there. You're the only one who can do it!"

David bit his lip. He thought of Judy Ketchel's love for this boy, the lad's fondness for his grandfather, Peter's underhanded dastardly actions, and almost blurted out the tale of crime.

"Graddy needs you, Dave," Theodore exclaimed. "Turn around and come back."

"I can't, Ted! I'm out on a bad case. And—the fact is, old man," and David lowered his voice, "I've just had a little tiff with your father. . . . He doesn't want me up at Kingsland Court any more."

Theodore was silent a moment, a sensation of weakness making him grip hard to the car door. It was all so strange—all so inexplicable, his grandfather's illness and his father's actions. Now to make matters worse, David Carmen was on his ear and absolutely refused to go to Kingsland Court.

"Well, at least give me a minute or two, Dave," he urged. "'Tisn't a life or death case you've got, I imagine."

"Not quite that!" answered Carmen. "But I'm in something of a hurry."

In spite of his disinclination to talk with the son of Peter Kingsland, David made no effort to start his car. Instead, he too stepped out, awkward and undecided. Silently, they walked shoulder to shoulder to the edge of the road. In the powerful light shed from the motor car, David saw plainly the troubled expression upon the boy's face, and Theodore noted the grim set of the doctor's lips.

"What'd you scrap with the pater about, Dave?" quizzed Teddy. "You might as well tell me or I'll get it out of him."

David kicked a piece of stone into the gutter, where it fell with a splatter into a puddle of water.

"I guess you know, Ted," was all he said.

"But I don't, Dave, and I want you to tell me. Dad sent me down to see you about Aunt Sarah. . . . Was your tiff with him about graddy?"

"I've been discharged as your grandfather's physic-



ian," observed David, making his voice as calm as he could.

Teddy uttered an exclamation under his breath.

"What for?" he demanded.

"I'm no good, I suppose," commented David, carelessly.

"Did you see graddy when you where at the Court?" asked the boy.

"No," replied Carmen, and he was glad Teddy had put the question as he did.

"Father wouldn't let you, I suppose, Dave? Now isn't that the truth? . . . Oh, Lord! What's the use of making me pump you like this?" Theodore's voice rang sharply, and deeply touched, David laid his hand upon his shoulder.

"Well, Ted," he answered gently, "when another doctor's been called in a decent chap can't force his way into a sick-room—See?"

"It's a damn shame," muttered Teddy. The pater's got about as much brains when it comes to sick people as a cat. . . . He's always upset graddy whenever he's been allowed to see him. . . . Did you get a glimpse of that other fellow?"

"Yes," and David stooped and pulled angrily at a piece of grass only to bite it sharply in two and throw the pieces to the ground.

"I told dad you'd be hopping mad when you heard about Munson being discharged, but you know how slick the pater crawls out of a thing. . . . Now come along back with me and we'll fight it out. . . . I'm going to see graddy. . . . Do, Dave!"

David shook his head.

"Couldn't think of it, son dear," he replied curtly. "And it doesn't really matter, Ted, I've lots to do."

"But it matters to me," growled Teddy, "and what's more, I'm going to see my grandfather the minute I get home. . . . Why, I've been kept away from him for days. They wouldn't let me see him. . . . I hate that nurse with her smiling, pretty face. If she'd been a man I'd a smashed her two or three times. . . . How's Aunt Sarah?"

"She's all right now," mumbled David.

For a long spell they stood in silence, the doctor trying to think of an excuse to get away.

"Is graddy going to get well?" Teddy broke in presently.

"His physician says so," responded David, enigmatically. "I've really got to get along now. . . . Good night, old man, and cheer up!"

"I'm sorry about the fuss at home, Dave," the boy burst forth, "and things'll change there, you can bet on that. . . . But there's something else I wanted to ask you. . . . Have you a notion there are pro-Germans at work in Ithaca?"

David thought of Judy Ketchel, thought of her tired, drawn young face, thought also of the drugged, old man in the House of Mystery, and ejaculated,

"I sure do, I damn well do, Ted!"

"I do too, now," he answered, "but when I first heard it I couldn't believe a soul in this old town would work for Germany. But lately——" He paused and David looked at him curiously. "I don't want to say anything against the pater," the boy went on savagely, "and I won't, but his ideas about fighting those beasts over there are too mawkish for me to stand. . . . I'm a man, Dave, and I'm going to have something to say about it myself."

David made no reply, and the boy continued,

"Another thing too, father's mean to Judy Ketchel! But then, I've made it plain that when I get back from France I'm going to marry her."

"So your father told me," remarked David, laconically.

"And I won't stand for any lectures about it from any one," snapped Teddy. "She's the best girl in the world, Judy Ketchel is!"

He flushed as he remembered he had come down the lake that night only to drive over the road her dear feet had trodden day after day. Quickly, he repeated with a catch in his voice,

"She's the best girl in the world."

"So she is," was Carmen's answer.

Teddy grinned.

"You're a trump, old boy," he chuckled, "and Pete'il

like her after a while. He doesn't like her because she is poor. Being poor isn't anything against one! . . . That's my opinion!"

"Mine, too, Ted! . . . Well, sorry, but I've got to get along, so good luck."

He held out his hand and Theodore seized it.

"I wish you'd come and see graddy tomorrow, Dave," he insisted longingly. "Couldn't you sort of overlook the pater and come anyhow?"

"Can't, Ted, it's not ethical! Surely you understand that! But then it's all right. . . . We won't worry! Here's hoping your grandfather'll get well!" and thinking of a beautiful woman with white hair and a girl with yellow curls, David smiled. "I think, old man, I really think he'll have good care."

\* \* \* \* \*

Teddy reached home, having fully made up his mind to assert himself. This he proceeded to do the minute he entered the house.

His father and Doctor Mixer were seated in the library when the boy walked in. Never had Peter seen Teddy so white, nor his eyes so darkly formidable.

"What's the meaning of all this rot?" were the lad's first words, looking at the doctor and then at his father.

Peter swallowed hard.

"What rot, my son?" he murmured.

"Oh, you know very well, pater," exclaimed Teddy. "Discharging Dave and keeping on—on this!"

He swung a brawny hand outward toward Mixer, and an angry flush rose to the doctor's face, simultaneously with his getting to his feet.

"I'm afraid you've forgotten your manners, son," chided Peter in his softest tones.

Excitement and anger raged in Theodore's usually smiling eyes, as he wheeled about upon his father.

"Manners—hell!" he retorted. "What do I care about manners, or anything else except—graddy? . . . I happened to meet Dave on the road. He says you chucked him off! . . . Why?"

"Your grandfather——" began Peter.

"Did graddy say for Dave to go?"

"He wasn't asked," replied Peter, coldly.

"No, I guess, by God, he wasn't," Theodore flashed. "Now, mind you, Dave doesn't give a whoop from hell at losing a patient, but I care, pater, and he's coming back! . . . Tonight, too!"

He fixed the doctor with a stormy stare.

"You get your things together, and get out of here, you little pup!" he grated savagely.

"Theodore!" Peter cried.

But Peter might as well have held his breath, for Teddy paid no attention to his sharp ejaculation.

The boy took several strides toward the pallid, little doctor.

"And take that Caldwell woman with you too, see?" he snapped. "If graddy needs any one to sit up with him I'll do it. I'm through, damn well through with all this business." From his great height he gazed down upon the trembling Mixer. "I'd hate to hit you," came like a rasp through his teeth, "you're such a runt! But as long as you call yourself a man I wouldn't mind giving you a taste of my fist."

"Theodore!" gasped Peter, again.

Why! This wasn't the same boy who had sat by patiently listening to his sermons on peace.

"I'll give you about twenty minutes to get out of here, Doctor Mixer," Theodore gritted, "and take that pussy-footed woman with you. If either of you're here by the end of that time, I'll throw you out. Kingsland Court is done with you two forever, thank God."

Then in a fit of desperation he whirled on his father, and on and on he raged, Peter cringing with fear and dreadful apprehension.

"Now!" Teddy ended, choking. "You know what I think of both of you and I'm going up to graddy! If he wants Dave he gets him, you hear that, don't you?"

Appalled beyond expression, and almost suffocated, Peter dragged at his collar.

"Wait, Ted," he exclaimed hoarsely. "Listen to me!"

You'll endanger your grandfather's life by waking him up suddenly."

Teddy threw out two impetuous hands.

"Oh, I guess not that!" he snapped between his teeth. "I've lived with him long enough to know what he wants. . . . And he wants Dave! . . . He wants me, and he wants Judy Ketchel, and what he wants he gets. . . . Until you came home——" Then being young, and used to thinking of Peter as a very large and wonderful soul, a sob rose in the boy's throat. "Until you came, pater," he burst out again, "graddy was all right! You've hec-tored the very life out of him some way. . . . Now, quit it!"

He was backing toward the door as he spoke, but Peter's next words brought him to a sudden halt.

"Your grandfather isn't at Kingsland Court," he cried in high tension.

A bewildered look swept over Teddy's face.

"Then where is he?" he shouted. "Tell me where——"

Suddenly he cut off his words and went straight as a shot to the pale doctor, his big fists doubled up, his finger-nails biting into his palms.

"You sent him away while I was gone, didn't you?" he roared. "You miserable whelp, where's my grandfather?"

The dapper little figure in white shrank back from the bristling red-headed, flaming-eyed boy.

"I don't know," gasped Mixer. "If I knew I'd say so. . . . He just went away. . . . We don't know where he is."

"I'll see for myself," snapped Theodore. "If you've any respect for your hide get out."

Neither Kingsland nor Doctor Mixer ever knew how long they waited until Teddy again came into the room. He looked even worse than when he'd left.

"You saw for yourself, son?" drawled Peter tremblingly, hoping that by keeping his own temper he could control his boy.

"Yes, I saw!" answered Teddy in a terrible voice. "And the woman's packing her things. . . . I twisted the truth

out of her, if you want to know. My God! . . . Crazy! . . . It's a lie, a damn lie. And it's night, too, and perhaps he was afraid. . . . Oh, dear God, where is he?"

Teddy's tones were staccato-like as if he were crying out in an evil dream. He leaned back against the door, his face twitching, his eyes fast filling with tears.

"And I've let you do this!" he moaned to his father. "I didn't know, oh, graddy, I—I—"

"Theodore," entreated Peter, rising up, his throat aching at the sight of his son's anguish.

Two shaking hands thrust forward warned Peter not to approach any nearer.

"Don't! For God's sake, don't speak to me," cried Teddy, bringing his arm across his white face, "and if you don't want murder done get these two rats away and get 'em away quick."

After Mixer was out of the room, Theodore dropped into a chair, his face falling into his hands.

The greatest mistake Peter made was placing his fingers on the boy's shoulder. The strong, young figure shrank as if fire had licked at it.

"Please," Teddy said quite distinctly, "please go away. . . . I'm going to get Dave Carmen to help me find graddy, so if you don't want to see him you'd better go with your two—two—God! What's the use? Just don't talk to me! . . . That's all I ask!"



## CHAPTER XXXIX

### THE DREAM BABY

ONE afternoon Sliver Jim slouched into the Ketchel farmhouse, and grandpap grouchily bade him sit down. Both were silent for a few minutes.

"This pesky draft'll take a hull two million men over seas to slam at the Fatherland," stated grandpap presently in an ugly voice.

Jim bobbed his head.

"Gott in Himmel," he ejaculated, "they'll get twice, mebbe three times that many before they're through. . . . Our folks're licked, sure, Herman."

"I guess so," wailed grandfather Ketchel. "What's the Society doin'? Much to help?"

A mental flash darkened Shuckies face, and his lip curled disdainfully.

"Nein!" he snapped. "Pete Kingsland fell down on the money part. I've come here more'n once to talk things over with you, grandpap, but you're always snoozin'."

A low noise came forth from Ketchel's lips with a cloud of tobacco smoke.

"Everybody says I sleep when I don't," he whined.

His head bobbed forward but it came up with a jerk as Shuckies touched him.

"You're just about gone now, Herman," he cried. "Listen! Meggs is so mad, he's sent for Stein. . . . We can't get on without cash. . . . Everything's all ready for me to leave town with the bombs. But I ain't goin' by myself. Meggs said to come an' talk to you. . . . Grandpap, you're all alone today, I see!"

Shuckies had come for a definite purpose. He listened intently during the next few moments for the sound of footsteps upstairs.

"Where's Judy?" he asked, taking out his pipe.

Ketchel sniffed and his withered old face fell into a grimace.

"I dunno!" he grumbled. "Guess she's at the haunted house. For the last two weeks she ain't been home long 'nough to make my tea, an' she stays away nights, too. But I can't help it any, Sliver, for I ain't no more grit to tell her what's what. . . . My arm's too lame to cane 'er, an' she just flies away every day like a bee."

Jim gathered his big feet close together under his chair.

"I'd like the chance of beatin' 'er once," was what he said.

The old German blinked his eyes drowsily.

"Go at it," he snarled. "Mein Gott, lick 'er up good, I say, Jim."

A disgruntled expression drew Shuckies heavy red mouth down at the corners.

"I can't 'less I marry her," he replied, surly-toned. "If it wasn't for that woman at the House of Mystery I'd get my innin's with Judy-flack! The damn witch sets the brat up against us all."

"An' Ollie acts like the devil lately, too," sighed grandpap, sinking back. "She ain't been sassy to me for ever so long."

Shuckies was just going to tell grandpap that the whole of Tompkins County was in arms over Roderick Kingsland's disappearance when Ketchel's head dropped back and he slept.

"Old fool," growled Jim to himself as he made for the door. "A feller can't get a word in edgewise before he's off. . . . No one'd believe he'd ever showed any signs of brains much less used 'em. . . . *He's* gone as far as this world is concerned."

\* \* \* \* \*

All through the rest of the afternoon grandfather Ketchel slept and when he bestirred himself the lamp was lighted and Olive was brewing his tea. He glanced about stealthily for Shuckies. The last thing he remembered the sun was shining, and Sliver Jim was with him.

Now, although he would not openly admit it, he knew he had dozed the day away. Germanlike, he began to

rail at Olive, but the girl limped stolidly about at her work, making no angry retorts. Ketchel blinked and stared at her.

"Why don't you talk back like you used to?" he sniffed. "It ain't much fun sittin' here howlin' my head off to a dumb female."

Olive covered the brown betty noisily and set the tea to brew.

"Just don't want to, grandpap," she answered, thinking of Honor Lessington. "Say, Jude ain't comin' home again tonight uther. She's goin' to stay——"

"At the witches' house, huh?" cracked grandfather.

"Ja!" was Olive's answer. "Here's your tea, grandpap. . . . I'm goin' out."

For a long time after Olive had gone, grandpap sat puffing at his pipe and turning over in his mind a newly conceived idea. He'd always believed in witches and still held to the notion the burning stake was the only way to get rid of their influence. He hadn't the slightest doubt but that the woman in the House of Mystery was one of those detestable creatures, and often had he wondered how the country folks allowed her to remain in the neighborhood.

He felt with rising rage that Judy Ketchel would have married Sliver Jim long ago if the woman hadn't been teaching her things no girl ought to know.

Ketchel mulled over Shuckies' talk of a few hours earlier—remembered the young German had said Judy couldn't be made to toe the mark with a gad unless he married her. Grandpap wanted Judy taught good manners, and Jim was the one to do it.

Then that being the case, out of the way must go the woman who meddled in other folk's business. It wouldn't be much of a job, thought grandpap, grinning—a little match, a little flame, a big fire, and the haunted house and its occupant would be gone.

Grandfather Ketchel put on his cap, took his cane and pipe, quietly opened the kitchen door and limped out. It had been ages since he'd taken his way to the lake, but he knew it well enough. Besides, the moon sent

a ghostly, white light to mark out his path. Night was just the time to do what grandfather had in mind. He couldn't do his deed by the light of day any more than Jim could perform the Society's work in the sunshine. He sniffed and grinned as he worked along toward the railroad tracks. Perhaps, he'd have the pleasure of telling the witch in her dying moments why she had been brought to such an end. Perhaps not, but he vowed mentally, sniffing and grinning in nervous excitement, the sun-up would see the House of Mystery in ruins and the corpse of the witch woman ready for any hand that might be employed to put her out of sight in the graveyard.

By that time, he'd be back in his own bed, as if he'd had nothing to do with it. at all. He would be glad---Sliver Jim would be glad, though why the young cub wanted Judy Ketchel, grandpap couldn't tell.

Once on the tracks, grandfather stood a while gazing at Lake Cayuga as it lay smooth and quiet in the white, night light. He blinked and contemplated the body of water dazedly. Into his mind came the times he had rowed that distance to Ithaca, week in and week out. He mouthed his hatred of the forest city over his pipe stem. His thoughts swung back to his errand, and he stumbled on, panting for breath, toward McKinney's. Again the old, familiar scenes raised the curtain of the past to other days, days when his boys used to swim there in that same water when it was warm, and in winters skated its surface. And—and his girl, Claudia, too!"

"Damn 'er," muttered grandfather, with a throb in his heart.

He was extremely lame by this time and tired almost to exhaustion, for he hadn't walked so far in years. He stopped at the side of McKinney's gorge and stared around. Ah! there was the haunted house only a little distance away. It seemed even farther than it was because grandpap was so nearly used up, but he had to reach it. So planting his cane firmly before every step, he limped on.

The house was dark save for a light in the lower, front room. Ketchel was pleased the light was there because

it would guide him directly up the hill. He turned from the tracks and began to feel his way gingerly up to the Garden of Glory.

In front of Honor Lessington's home he came to a halt and blinked at it. Then he prowled up on the porch and peeped in at the window. There, seated with her back to him, was Judy Ketchel, and at the sight of her yellow curls grandpap's old jaws set rigidly.

He'd get her out of the house before he made away with the witch woman. He crawled away from the window but struck the side of the house sharply with his cane.

The door opened suddenly, and Herman Ketchel stared at a beautiful white-haired woman for fully thirty seconds. His wits scattered an instant, then by sheer force, he dragged them back again. The Lessington woman was a witch. He had come to purify her, but he wasn't quite ready, no, not just yet. He wanted to send Judy Ketchel scooting back to the farmhouse first, and—and suddenly he had an overwhelming desire to sleep.

Honor's fast beating heart kept her silent. She recognized in the shaking, old figure the father she'd longed to see. How grim and hard-lined his face was! In one hand he held his cane which he leaned on, and in the other, his pipe. How awfully tired and old he looked! She wanted to put her arms about him, smother him with kisses, tell him to forget all the unhappy days that had gone. Then Judy Ketchel suddenly recognized him and came hastily to Mrs. Lessington's side.

Still grandfather Ketchel stared, at moments his mind cleared—at others confusion blotting out the present and forcing him back a span of dark years. There was something familiar in this tall, witch woman, for she was a witch, everybody knew that. Didn't she live in a haunted house? Yet, as much as he wanted to constantly remember just what Mrs. Lessington was, and how Sliver Jim had said she was to blame for a lot of Judy's cussedness, grandpap's mind raced away to another woman, the mother of his boys. Distinctly it came before his mind's eye the day she had died, leaving him a tiny girl with a mouth like a bird. He shivered a little, and Honor Les-



sington thrust forth her hand, but withdrew it again as grandpap's cane lifted from the porch. The witch woman's forward motion had sent the baby with the bird-mouth out of grandpap's mind. He scowled at Honor and then at Judy, sniffed and grinned.

"Two haunted hags," he gritted, shaking.

He staggered a little, and again Honor held out her hands.

"No matter, dear," she said softly. "Come in and rest."

Grandpap shook his head, still trying to keep his mind upon what he had come to do. How the present mingled with the past! Two young boys leapt into his mental vision and out again. Then he groaned as he remembered they were dead, Bill, and Oscar too. He lost for a moment everything but his little girl—laughing, mischievous and oh, so very dear. Like a woodland elf she danced into his memory, but had gone before he could touch her. There stood the witch woman, and beside her Judy Ketchel. God! how he wanted to strike out with his cane, but, somehow, the baby with the bird-mouth held him back. Muttering a vicious oath, grandpap jerked himself together with a determined effort.

"I come to tell you, woman," he husked forth, "you're a menace to the country. That girl there, Judy Ketchel's a hellion, since she's known you."

Honor went forward a little, Judy clinging to her.

"Come in and rest," Mrs. Lessington pleaded again, hushing her fast-coming breaths. The cane came slowly up, and Judy reached out caught hold of it, and dragged grandpap across the door sill into the room.

"Make 'im some tea, mam," she gasped, still holding the cane. "He's near dead."

The years of separation—the ever-present desire to have him with her overcame all Honor's fear.

"But first, Judy dear," she cried brokenly, "let him sit down. He's trembling so!" Then, no longer hesitating, she went straight to grandpap, her hands outflung, her eyes brimming with tears. "Oh, my precious father," she groaned, "don't you remember your baby girl, don't



you love me any more? . . . Judy, dear, I'm—I'm Claudia Ketchel, and—and—your grandfather's—my father."

Grandpap swayed in his tracks. A vacant expression passed over his face, then the smile of his dreams softened his lined, twitching mouth and dropping his cane and pipe, he too held out his hands.

"Baby," he lisped, "kleines voglein—I've come for my baby, Judy Ketchel."

Judy was so bewildered when she saw her crabbed, old grandfather fall into Honor's arms, that she began to sob violently. Then of a sudden, she realized who Honor Lessington was, and, "oh, Lordy, Gody," she cried, "now I got an aunt."

Still smiling Ketchel allowed both Honor and Judy to lead him into a little back room where he submissively went to bed. Over and over he murmured the dream words Judy had always heard as far back as she could remember, and over and over he smoothed and kissed Honor's hands and face. Then Judy saw a wonderful thing. Grandpap was crying real tears of joy.

"Judy Ketchel got you for me, liebchen," he sighed.

"Gott im Himmel, my baby girl an' me in God's land of plenty."

Then he fell asleep and there Judy left them, grandpap at peace in his land of slumber, and his dream-baby holding tight to his hands. Just as Judy sat down in the living room, Olive's shrill call came distinctly to her ears from the depths of the Garden of Glory.

## CHAPTER XL

### "I'M DONE WITH THE HUNS

"I CAN'T find grandpap," were Olive's first words. "Jud, darlin', honest I give him his tea, but he ain't home. I just run over to Jim's a minute, an' when I got back he wasn't to be found anywhere."

Then Judy told her the story of grandfather's coming, and of their relation to Honor Lessington.

"I'm awful glad," sighed Olive. "Only think of her bein' grandpap's dream baby, an' livin' almost within gun shot of us all!"

"An' Aunt Claudy loves you, too, honey," offered Judy. "She said so! . . . What're you cryin' for, dearie? . . . Why, Ollie Ketchel, you're keepin' something back—you'd better out with it, or mebbe I'll clip you beside the ear."

Judy had thrown one loving arm around her shivering cousin, and as she talked drew her to the porch.

"Sit down here an' tell me, now," she urged.

Together, they sat down on the top step, Olive's low caught sobs hurting Judy to the very depths of her heart.

"I don't know what it is, Jude!" the lame girl sobbed forth after a while. "That's what makes me feel so bad. . . . Jim's so mixed up with them Citizens I bet I never get him now! Any time I expect to hear he's been bagged."

Much concerned, Judy considered the moonlit garden and the canopy of stars above her.

"So!" she murmured. "He wouldn't tell you nothin'?"

"Not much, only there's goin' to be an awful time at the falls tonight! Jim did tell me that! . . . Kingsland can't get the Society any money, and this afternoon a man by the name of Stein came to Ithaca. Sliver says he's goin' to raise the deuce with all the Citizens. The

hull raft of 'em are so mad, boilin' mad, at your boy's daddy an' Jim says Meggs wasn't goin' to let Mr. Pete know about Stein gettin' in town. I 'spose they mean to skin 'im, I don't know, though. . . . How's old man Kingsland?"

Judy shivered.

"He ain't spoke a word since he's been here," she said, "an' the poor old thing wants to talk so bad. He walks round a bit but he looks 'most dead all the time."

"You seen your boy?" sniffed Olive.

Judy's mind was on something else just then, and Olive repeated after a time, "Seen your boy, I suppose, Jude?"

Had she seen her boy? Why even now she could feel his dear arms—hear his love words mingling with the tiny wavelets slapping the shadowy shore beyond.

"Yes, sure, darlin'," she replied softly, "an' he talks to me about his graddy all the time. . . . He's almost heart broke, an' I came near tellin' him about it, only Doc Carmen says I can't—yet."

Olive grunted.

"Give your red head a mess of Ketchel kisses——" she suggested. "That'll buck 'im up, I bet."

In the darkness Judy blushed. That was just what she had done, still she didn't tell the other girl about it.

She changed the subject quickly.

"You just ought a seen grandpap, Ollie," she exclaimed, "he's lost all his meanness! Seems awful lovely to have Mrs. Lessington for an aunt to us both. . . . An' granddaddy made her promise she'd never leave him, an' I'm guessin' mebbe he'll live right here from now on. Aunt Claudy says so."

"Holy Himmel," came in one breath from Olive. "What'll ever come of me."

"Oh, you'll stay, too, I 'spose! Anyway, you will tonight. . . . Come on in!"

Judy tried to lift Olive to her feet, but the lame girl only crouched lower.

"Nein, I can't," she choked drearily, "I'm goin' to the falls an' see what the Citizens're goin' to do."

How full of misery were her tones! How Judy's heart

ached to be of real value in the only thing that mattered to her cousin!

"Want me to come along, Ollie?" she asked.

Olive sat up, catching her breath.

"I sure do, Jude, only I was afraid to ask you!"

"Wait here, dearie," and Judy sprang and went into the house. She carefully closed the door behind her and stood in the middle of the room, her fingers on her lips, thinking. Then without making any noise, she slipped to the little, back bedchamber where grandpap still smiled in his sleep, and Honor Lessington sat beside the bed.

The girl crept forward and dropped down on her knees.

"I'm goin' away with Ollie a while," she whispered to Honor. "Say, can I use your telephone just once?"

Honor nodded and Judy, kissing her, slipped away. This time too she made sure the door leading from the bedroom to the living room was closed. From a hook she lifted the telephone directory and after some searching she called a number into the mouthpiece and waited. Never in all this world had her heart beat as it did now. Never had she felt so near collapse.

A deep voice called, "Hello," and Judy, swaying, called back,

"Please, is Mr. Peter Kingsland there?"

"This is he," the same voice replied. "What do you want?"

Judy's tongue doubled up in knots and she found it difficult to straighten it out enough to speak back.

"Stein's in town. You get out quick—he's goin' to skin you."

Then she slammed up the receiver, too unnerved to say anything more. Yet she was sure he'd heard because the name "Stein," repeated hoarsely, had caught her ear as she'd shot her warning. When she came out again on the porch she remarked to Olive,

"I said I was goin' out with you a while! . . . Lordy, Ollie, you'd be tickled to death to see grandpap. He's grinnin' in his sleep like a nice kid, an'—an' Aunt Claudy sittin' by him holdin' his hands."

Then silently, fingers clasping fingers, the two girls took the lake-road leading to Ithaca. Reaching the Fall Creek Bridge, Olive drew Judy to a standstill. Far above them, through the grayness of the night, the water tumbling over the rocks could be plainly heard. The lame girl waved one hand toward it.

"A nice place for men countin' themselves decent to gather nights," she snarled. "I hate it all, I do! I hate it for Jim as well as for me. There's where they made that bomb you swiped. . . . Come on!"

They scrambled up the narrow path that ran beside the creek and when within a short distance of the falls, they paused on a flat rock.

"I'm goin' in," breathed Olive. "You get back there under one of them bushes. . . . You mustn't let any of the Citizens see you. . . . You be awful careful, Jude darlin'!"

For a moment the two frightened, young things clung together in terror. The dark majesty of the rock-lined gorge—the roar of the falls, added to the thought of the men hidden away in the gloom, plotting death to the brave hearts soon to go "over there." filled each girlish heart with unquenchable fear.

"I'll be here if you want me, Ollie," answered Judy in an awed whisper. "An' remember what I've told you. It's just this—don't get mad, but keep on sayin' to yourself every minute that Jim'll be carried through. You'll get him if you stick like pitch to thinkin' good things."

"Shush! Get back," hissed Olive. "Some men're coming up the path."

Shuddering, the girls stumbled back against the steep hillside and sank into the shadows, and a hand was tightly pressed over each set of chattering teeth. Thus they sat until three, tall figures stole past them and disappeared in the night gloom toward the waterfall.

"There goes some of 'em—I'll go on in now," said Olive, and Judy, almost hysterical at the tragedy in her cousin's voice, watched her melt away in the darkness.

The while Judy Ketchel sat huddled up in the shadows, her mind strayed from the wilderness of Fall Creek back



to the House of Mystery. She wished to do something vital for Senator Kingsland. If he could only talk and tell her what he wanted, how gladly she'd do it! But David Carmen had given his opinion that the old man might never speak again, and how many hours she'd sat beside him, holding his hands, and trying to read in the troubled eyes what he desired to say with his lips. Then she remembered all of Teddy's boyish agony at his grandfather's disappearance. Truly, had Doctor Carmen strictly enjoined silence upon her! That and nothing else had kept her mouth closed when with a few words she could have brought back the smile to Teddy's lips and happiness to his eyes.

Suddenly out of the deep dark of the night a rumbling noise mingled with the sound of splashing water, and Judy sat up quickly. Then she heard a woman's scream. It echoed away and died in the woods like a Banshee's shriek.

Instantly Judy was up. That was Olive's cry.

She stood for a moment with her hand on her heart, then her own name, "Judy," came to her even louder than the scream. Olive had called her from up there under the falls. Judy Ketchel forgot how frightened she'd been at her cousin's description of Meggs, forgot Olive's groans when she had muttered over the story of a man from New York, even forgot her own terror of Sliver Jim. To the falls she raced, her feet slipping and sliding on the wet, dark rocks. Under the roaring water she bolted and then into the narrow confines of the rock cavern. Coming into the light that seemed bright in comparison to the black outside, she stood tremblingly still. Then the bright blue eyes took in one person after another.

Over in one corner she saw a creature, a hideous thing, with a long scar from his eye to his chin, pallid and horrible. Near him was another man dressed in the height of fashion, shrinking back against the stone wall. In a third man, Judy recognized Sliver Jim. Olive was crouched down close to him and she was sobbing and holding to Shuckies' legs as if she feared some unseen power would snatch him away. The recognition of another person



quite took away her breath. Teddy Kingsland stood upright against the rocks opposite the other three, his mouth set in a straight, hard line. Near him were two young men, strangers to Judy, but as rigid as her sweet-heart himself. In front of them were several dark cans and near by a bundle which looked to Judy like a pillow.

She caught her breath again as she saw in Teddy's hands a gun, and one like it grasped in the fingers of the two beside him.

For the space of several breaths, she stood looking straight at Teddy, and although he hadn't lowered the revolver his stormy eyes were fixed upon her. Slowly, her gaze dropped away from his, and her face grew burning hot. She wanted to run away, to snatch Olive from that rock-slab and rush back to Honor Lessington. After the first stunned, terrified glance Olive had given her, the lame girl kept her face hidden against Sliver Jim.

"Get up, Ollie," commanded Judy in a voice unlike her own.

Olive scrambled up, and Judy Ketchel went over and stood at her cousin's side. She could feel Teddy's burning gaze follow her every action, but she did not turn again to him. She was there to help Ollie. Only God knew what her boy-heart had come for.

"What'd you want of me, Ollie darlin'?" she demanded hoarsely.

Blinding tears were streaming down Olive's face as she flung out her arms.

"Ithaca's goin' to tar an' feather the Citizens," she gasped. "They've found out all about everything, Jude. . . . We're all goners. Jim's a goner, I'm a goner——"

"Be still," said Judy, deadeningly, and Olive grew very quiet.

Then Judy turned and looked at Teddy Kingsland, and he noticed there was no purple in the steely blue eyes. A deep shudder went over him. He couldn't bear to see Judy Ketchel ranged there with the criminals it had taken him days to unearth.

"So!" she interjected, trying to speak steadily. "You're goin' to tar up these duffers some—huh?"

She wondered almost dully if Peter Kingsland had taken her warning and gone, and if those cringing Citizens of the World knew the red haired boy with the cans of tar, the bag of feathers and the gun was a son of the man who had brought Ithaca's Society crumbling to the earth like a house of sand.

"We sure are," gritted Teddy, lifting the gun a little higher. "You take that girl away now! . . . There won't be any more work done for the Huns in Ithaca after we've finished with these chaps."

Judy's eyelids fell a little, then her burning, blue gaze challenged forth again.

"Tar's hard to get off!" she remarked to gain time. She couldn't think of anything to help Olive on the spur of the moment.

"Sure thing," grouched Theodore. "That's why we're goin' to put it on. . . . Say, you two girls get out of here! We don't want to have to put you out!"

Judy dropped Olive's hand and walked toward the speaker. Not by any sign had she shown that she had ever seen him before.

"Let's talk first," she ejaculated. "The tar'll go on as sooty black in twenty minutes as now."

No one answered her appeal, but Teddy did lower his gun a little. He was more angry that she should plead for these villains than he had been when he first discovered their hiding place.

"Will you talk about it a bit?" Judy asked him again. "What's the rumpus, an' what's—the use of wastin' tar?"

By slow edging forward during her pleas and pauses, she was almost within touching distance of him. The purple he always loved in her eyes had darkened them and a little smile touched the corners of her lips. Judy wanted to call him by name, to take him and Olive and Jim away from the hollow rock cavern. But there was the tar, the thick tick of feathers and the three revolvers. At her own inability to do anything, she went white and staggered a little. The two young men with Teddy Kingsland were fascinated with the sight of her, for the yellow curls, the large, appealing, purple-blue eyes, the

bare, brown feet, were enough to send tar and feathers out of any boy's mind.

Judy sent a thrilling glance from Teddy to them.

"Won't you please all let's set?" she begged, "and we'll talk it out."

Wheeling about, she centered impatient eyes upon the silent group of Citizens. The man dressed like those of Ithaca's best, glared at her, and all at once she grew angry at him. This was the man from New York—the man Olive had said engineered all the wicked deeds Jim had tried to do and had ordered the carrying of her friend away to an insane asylum.

"Set," she snapped at Stein, "or I'll ask one of these good Yankees to knock you down!"

Scowling, the man dropped on a rock, and one by one they all seated themselves in silence. It seemed as if Judy Ketchel had at one jump become master of the whole affair. Then she seated herself near Olive and took the girl's limp, cold hand in hers.

"Now tell me all about it," she said directly at Teddy.

"These snakes," began Teddy tersely, and he waved his hand at the Citizens, "are working against this country—they're busy with plans to help Germany."

"So!" ejaculated Judy, cupping her chin in her free hand, "an' you think puttin' tar on their hides'll make 'em quit, eh? Will your doin' a dirty deed help along France, Ithaca, Rogues' Harbor an' all the rest of the world?"

Her two long questions so distinctly put, brought unlooked for confusion to Theodore and his friends. Each boyish face became scarlet.

"We want to do our bit!" said one of them in excuse.

"Tarrin' folks ain't like honest fightin'," Judy shot back. "Doin' his bit with a Yankee just means cleanin' the dirty Huns up good and plenty! I can't see where the tar comes in, though."

Teddy bent forward and frowned at her.

"What would be your way with these people?" he rasped. "Let 'em go, I suppose!"

"I'd make 'em go," was Judy's ready answer. "I'd set

their noses New York way, an' say to 'em, 'Scoot now, while the scootin's good.'"

She was too serious in manner for her words to bring the faintest smile from any one.

Theodore looked down for several moments. Not a sound could be heard but the water splashing over the rocks outside. Then he glanced up.

"Will you fellows leave town tonight, both of you?" he began, "if—if——"

A forward bend of Judy's yellow head checked his question.

"Don't trust 'em, sir," she thrust in. "Let your two good Yankee friends there see 'em out of town. . . . Some one'll pick 'em up in New York if they keep on doin' the Hun work. . . . Then—then all you Ithaca boys'll be clean-handed to fight in France when you get there."

Impatiently Theodore's shoulders lifted.

"But this fellow?" and he threw his hand out toward Shuckies, leaning blue-lipped against the ragged rock.

"He stays here with us," responded Judy, throwing back her curls, "an' before we get done mebbe I'll let you dab tar all over 'im."

"I'd enjoy that!" he snarled, thinking of a day he had beaten him on the lake-road.

Olive cried out, but Judy hissed that blessed little word, "Pappy," in her ear, and the lame girl dropped face-down on the rocks.

"But you don't need all these folks around to tar up one shiverin' Hun!" Judy told Teddy. "Now, then, if these fellows'd go away an' leave the business to you an' me, mebbe we could fix Jim so he'd not want to shout for the Fatherland any more."

Her fingers tightened on Olive's, and the girl didn't move.

"Tell 'em all to go," sighed Judy. "Please!"

She watched Teddy's two friends marshal Meggs and Stein out under the waterfall, and sighed in satisfaction that Ithaca had seen the last of those two Germans. It couldn't have been less than two minutes that the four

sat in absolute silence. Then Judy coughed, and Olive wriggled in desperate agony.

"I guess we won't need that gun you got," Judy said softly at length, "an' I'm askin' you, boy," she looked straight at Teddy, "to let Sliver Jim go too. . . . He's had enough I guess, an' you won't hear any more from him."

"I won't!" muttered Teddy.

Judy considered him a minute.

"What'd you let off the others for then?" she demanded, her voice rising. "If one gets a tarrin', they all ought to get it. They were Huns like Sliver is."

There was no answer to this but a surly shrug. Theodore knew why he wouldn't let the German farmer go free, but he didn't explain it to the owner of the steady, blue eyes.

"I know just how you feel," Judy went on reluctantly. "Sliver's a wicked man, but I guess after this he'll be better."

"I'm going to give him a taste of something that'll make him better," cried Teddy. "He won't get away from me this time."

Olive groaned again, and Sliver fidgeted his feet over the rocks.

"Well, mebbe he won't!" Judy conceded. "But everything's got to be talked out first. I did say I'd let you stick a little tar on Sliver——"

"You promised I could daub him up well," Theodore growled.

"So you can, Teddy, but first let me tell you something," assured Judy, dropping Olive's hand.

She got up and moved forward, and as Teddy watched her, his throat tightened. She was extremely pale, and her under lip quivered.

"I thought, mebbe," she murmured low, "you'd let him go this once——" A dry little sob broke from her lips "Because—because I wanted you to. . . . Sliver'd do something, kiss our flag, take an oath on it, mebbe, or anything you like."

Teddy was dreadfully jealous. He had been more or



less so ever since he'd found Judy and Shuckies together the day he could not forget.

"Oh, he wouldn't keep his word unless I taught him how," he scoffed. "I know his breed. They're all alike."

Judy wasn't sure about that, but one thing she did know. The evil smelling stuff in the cans would make Sliver unfit for the exalted position he soon would take. And "a pappy's a pappy," Judy had always insisted, and she'd keep on saying it until she died. She glanced back at Olive without answering the boy.

"Honey," she told her, "go on over by Jim awhile, an' stay there 'til I want you."

Olive dragged herself painfully along the rocks to Shuckies' side. One of the man's thin hands fell upon her shoulder and she lay snuggled up against him, whispering over and over frantically, "Carry Jim through, God in the sky, carry 'im through this once."

Judy got down beside Teddy, and she tried to smile at him, but his dear face looked so marble-white—so wretched, she couldn't.

"Some things're awful hard to tell," she gulped, glancing down, "but I might as well begin. Then you'll know. . . . You remember that night when I said there was something I couldn't tell you? The night you beat Jim?"

Did he remember it! How well, how very well he remembered it. And hadn't part of this night's preparation been to even up a little with the German farmer?

"Jim's goin' to be a fine pappy some of these days," Judy kept on, "an' tar on him wouldn't make 'im much good."

"Oh, for the love of Heaven! Don't!" moaned Teddy, forgetting the many times she'd told of her love for him.

The lovely face came so close to his, he could have kissed it.

"A cunnin' little baby without a daddy's a sad thing to see," she murmured in his ear. "Now, sayin' that if you made Jim a honest to God father, a husband to the girl he's hurt a lot, wouldn't that take the place of the tarrin'?"

Teddy groaned again.



"Tell him to come here," Judy trailed on. "Please, do!"

Perhaps at that moment Teddy made the supreme sacrifice of his life. He got to his feet, and Judy arose also.

"Come over here, you," he commanded, fingering the revolver, "you, Shuckies, come here."

Jim crept forward, slithering in terror, until he was staring up at them mutely.

"This girl tells me——" Teddy gritted.

He stopped suddenly. What had checked his words was the sight of the lame girl getting up and limping across the rocks toward him. Close at his side she dropped on her knees.

"Mister," she wailed, looking up into his eyes, "don't hurt Jim. . . . Please—I got to have 'im, I just got to."

Then light flashed across Theodore Kingsland. The rage died from his heart, and he stooped and lifted up the little figure.

Judy's eyes were brimming with tears. How tall, how beautiful he was as he held up her trembling cousin, and oh, how she loved him!

"This man belongs to you, I imagine," said Teddy, swallowing hard.

"Ja!" came in a dreary sob.

"And you want to marry him?"

The question glided out as smooth as velvet. Judy had never heard his voice so deeply thrilling.

"Ja, sir," mourned Olive, again. "Jim's a good man, awful good, Sliver is. He wouldn't've done mean things if it hadn't a been for them men just gone. An' mebbe your——"

Judy's forward spring and her impetuous catching of Olive around the neck choked off the girl's words.

"Let's not blame anybody for all this wretched business," she interposed. Then she threw up her head and smiled through her tears. "We got lots to be happy for. . . . After tonight there won't be any more Citizens of the World in Ithaca. Then Jim and Ollie'll be happy, livin' in granddaddy's house when they get married. . . . Grandpap Ketchel won't got there any more, ever."

Meantime Jim had stood very quiet, watching her from under his heavy lids.

Simply she explained to Teddy who Mrs. Lessington was, and Ketchel's visit to the House of Mystery.

"Grandpap's that happy, Sliver," she ran on, "you'd just cry to see him. . . . You're goin' to marry Ollie, eh, Jim?"

"You'll marry her, Shuckies?" Teddy's quick demand followed. "You ought to, you know."

Jim shook himself as if he were ridding his mind of a nightmare. His fierce desire for Judy Ketchel died as he remembered all Olive had done for him.

"Ja!" he shivered. "I'm goin' to marry her tonight, I am! Ollie keeps a house a sight nicer'n Jude does."

"Oh, Jim," sniffed Olive, snatching her hands from Theodore's and holding them out to the other man, "I'll make our home spic and span, just like you want it, darlin'!"

"Come then," said Theodore Kingsland, and, flinging his arm around a tearful, yet smiling Judy, he led the way out of the rock-cavern into the night.

\* \* \* \* \*

Two hours later Judy Ketchel and Teddy Kingsland stood with Mr. and Mrs. James Shuckies in the little front room of the Ketchel farmhouse.

Theodore walked to the grate and considered the picture of the Kaiser, Emperor of Germany. Swinging around, he said curtly,

"Better take that down, Shuckies!"

"Ja!" drawled Jim, "it'll come down tonight an' the flag, too. . . . I'm done with the Huns, by God, forever!"

Judy gurgled. Then she thought of something she had to explain before she went back to grandpap, and woman-like, she stepped to Teddy's side as if for protection. The smile had disappeared, and the blue spread away the purple in her eyes. Theodore seized the hand she thrust out to him.

"Ollie, Jim," she exclaimed. "I want to tell you——" she shuddered during a long pause. Then she took up bravely, "Just this! Denny ain't dead at all. My Lady

of Roses an' Doc Carmen sent the kid to a farm to get well."

Olive's deep moan was followed by a long drawn out sigh from her husband.

"That night," Judy went on, "you both remember the time—I—I—swiped Denny out of the window an' took him to the House of Mystery. Then I hustled back—well," she caught at a sob rolling upward to her throat and tried to smile at the horror-stricken couple—"it was only a bundle of rags I buried in Pappy Bill's grave."

Teddy's arm went around her, as she leaned against him, shivering.

"What Judy tells you is true, Shuckies," he affirmed. "I helped her carry the little chap that rainy night to Mrs. Lessington."

"Oh, Gott im Himmel, how glad I am," cried Olive. "Jim, you heard—you——"

"Ja, I heard, Ollie, an' I'm glad, too."

During the moment Olive and her cousin were saying goodbye, Judy whispered,

"You got a fine lookin' husband, honey, an' he'll make a beautiful pappy. . . . Goodbye, darlin' . . . Tomorrow you'd best beat it over an' take a peep at grandpap."

## CHAPTER XLI

### A DARK NIGHT, A STORM AND A BABY GIRL

ONE hot, summer day, grandpap and his "dream baby" were working together in the Glory Garden. Morning after morning, grandfather would follow his daughter about, crooning his love words first in English then in German, for mentally, grandpap had gone back to live in the days of his young fatherhood with the little girl with a mouth like a bird. Physically, he was like a frail, small boy, tottering around on his cane. Since the night of his advent to the House of Mystery, he had never spoken of his dead sons, Bill and Oscar, and Sliver Jim and Olive too came to his memory only when he saw them, then they, like the rest, were lost in his happy present.

At the sound of a motor horn, Mrs. Lessington looked up and smiled at David Carmen as he entered the Garden of Glory.

"Ted doesn't happen to be here, does he, dearest?" he asked of Honor as he slowed down his car.

"Not now, he isn't," she answered, "but he was a little while ago. He took Judy up to Rogues' Harbor. . . . The dear child! She does look so pretty in her new clothes. You'd think, David, she'd worn pretty things all her life."

"She's a dandy girl," remarked David as they walked slowly to a bench. "And dear old Ted—it doesn't seem possible he's going to camp tomorrow! I wonder——"

"They're both as happy as little birds, those two children," interrupted Honor. "Ted's like some one else I know, always thoughtful of other people. It was his idea that he and Judy should go up to Rogues' Harbor for him to say good-bye to Olive."

She sighed deeply as she spoke the last name.

"You needn't worry about Olive, dear heart" urged

David, "she's going to be perfectly all right, and you said yourself, honey bunch, she and Jim were as snug in the farmhouse as two bugs in a rug. . . . Didn't you, dear?"

"So they are," Honor answered, "but the poor child looks so frail."

"Happy, though!" laughed David. "And we'll see after a while too, if that lameness of hers can't be helped some."

"You're such a comfort, David!" and Honor smiled at grandpap as he came up to her, one arm loaded with flowers. A cheery greeting from David brought a twinkle to the old man's eyes. During his stay with his daughter he and the Ithaca doctor had become great friends.

"Go in, daddy dear," said Honor, "and fill the vases, and then you'd better lie down for a while after you have had a smoke."

"Schr gut," consented grandpap, and he limped away. The man and the woman were silent as Honor's eyes followed her father to the house.

"I received a letter from Peter this morning, sweetheart," David exclaimed after a while. "He didn't explain his absence at all! . . . It's strange he disappeared so suddenly."

"It certainly is," nodded Honor.

David laughed.

"Pete's a bluff and a big one at that!" Then he continued impatiently, "He had the nerve to write that as I was the oldest friend of the family in Ithaca he wanted to ask me to tell Teddy he'd be home tonight. Now why do you suppose he did that? The whole thing was very curt from beginning to end. I can't think of anything but that he's seen his sister, and she showed him my letter about Ted's enlisting. I thought that would bring a peep from my lord, Peter."

"He's certainly very queer, David! Everyone thinks it's funny he didn't stay at home and find his father. . . . What are you going to do, dear?"

David grinned down into the dark, troubled eyes turned to his.

"Oh, just stick around, little mother-heart, and see what he does," he returned heartily, "but I must find Ted and tell him. . . . Then, Honor, I really think the boy ought to see his grandfather before he goes away. I'm afraid he'll never have another chance."

"Yes, of course he ought to, although Senator Kingsland is getting better every day. Why, he's walked ever so many times all around up stairs. If he could only talk I'm sure he'd feel better. . . . Judy held his hand last night with a pencil in it a long time to see if he couldn't write what he wants to say, but his fingers trembled so he couldn't."

"He never will. I'm afraid he's developing softening——"

"Oh, not that!" cried Honor, horrified.

David bent his head in affirmation.

"I fear it, though, dearest, I do, indeed. He's been through so much and will have to have great care. That's why I say I'm going to watch Mr. Pete, as Judy calls him."

Then while they were talking of their own soon-coming, happy day, grandpap was filling the bowls and vases with the blossoms he'd grown to love. After he had finished, he sat down and blinked at them.

"Pretty posies," he muttered dreamily. "You'll always be heads up with me an' the baby in God's land of plenty."

Then he lighted his pipe and for a few minutes smoked steadily. Into the silence of the room penetrated a little sound, and a shrewd expression crossed his face. Grandpap had heard that same noise many times before. And it came from upstairs too. It seemed like a groan to granddaddy Ketchel.

He laid down his pipe, looked about to assure himself no one saw him and then crept towards the stairway. True, his baby girl had told him never to go upstairs, and until that moment he had obeyed submissively. Curious as a mischievous boy, grandpap opened the stair door and by the use of his cane crawled slowly up the steps.



He took a peep into several rooms and, finding no one, went down the narrow hall to the back of the house.

He heard the moan once more, something like the whimpering of a child, and it had come from the very room he was standing near. Without any more hesitation, grandpap opened the door and limped over the sill. From the bed in the corner another man stared at him, and, for a moment, Ketchel grasped with some fleeting memory in his mind. Where had he seen that white face before, where the burning, demanding eyes? Grandpap tried to remember but couldn't.

Senator Kingsland's countenance grew gray as Ketchel went forward, his lips wide with greeting.

"Wie gehts, old horse?" he grinned. "Want to toddle downstairs?"

The terrified look in Kingsland's eyes drew the old farmer closer to the bed, and for a time they eyed each other.

"Talk, can't you?" questioned Ketchel, presently. The thing in his mind was troubling him again. Where had he seen this man? Then, like a vaporous cloud, the desire to remember drifted away, and he crumpled up on the bed beside the other, his cane slipping to the floor.

"Fine day," he snickered. "Gott im Himmel, an' flowers all over everything. Claudy says I can pick all I want. Claudy's my baby. You know my girl, Claudy?"

The noise that had attracted him to the room fell again upon his ears. Grandpap was sorry for the stranger. He looked so ill, and so white.

"Sick, I bet, huh?" he grunted. "Get up an' come along an' see my baby, Claudy. She's in the garden."

The mixture of emotions on Kingsland's face proved that he heard every word. Ketchel observed he was making desperate efforts to speak.

"Cat's run off with 'is tongue, poor, old top," he cackled. "Granddaddy's sorry. . . . No matter. . . . Come downstairs, an' Claudy'll make you all well."

With grandpap's help, Kingsland managed to sit up in bed.

"Gut," exclaimed Ketchel. "Lieber Gott, your legs're as long as a clothes-pole."

Shaking like a leaf, he slipped to the floor and picked up his cane. Out of some yesterday an indistinct memory, the crowning figure of which was the thin, old man before him, rose and tapped at his brain, and at the edge of the tangled fancy, a baby floated like a butterfly in the sunshine. He grinned and sniffed and sobbed. My baby, sang grandpap's heart, and he drew his sleeve across his face.

"Want to see Claudy, I bet," he choked brokenly. "She's beautiful as a angel. . . . Get off that bed, an' I'll take you down. . . . Donder und Blitzen, you wriggle like a goose with a stuck throat."

The rasp in his tones, so like the Ketchel of Rogues' Harbor, put new energy into Kingsland. He stood up and placed his hand on the little farmer's shoulder.

"You're as tall as a tree," mumbled grandpap, glancing up. He almost tumbled over under the bolty blow that shot into his brain as his eyes rested on the haggard face above him. He wanted to remember so badly, and he was tired too. His legs shook, and his head fell forward. Suddenly he was dragged to his balance by the thin, gripping fingers.

"The baby!" slithered Kingsland.

Grandpap heard the word, and the drowse left him.

"My Claudy," he smiled. . . . "Come on, sir, an' she'll give you—flowers."

With tottering steps, the two old men crawled along slowly to the stairway.

"Now set!" commanded grandfather Ketchel. "Set an' slide down! I get into the Glory Garden that way when I'm awful lame and sore."

Side by side, they sank down together, Ketchel's one hand holding to his cane while the other arm went around Kingsland's thin body. Thus down they went like two small children, each step drawing a groan from Kingsland, and a sniffing grunt from grandpap.

When they were at the bottom, Ketchel opened the door,

and again, unevenly, two pairs of worn out feet undertook the journey to the living room. Across the space to the couch, granddaddy Ketchel led Senator Kingsland.

"Best lay down here," he said, breathing hard. "You look near dead! . . . Claudy lets me get on the sofy any time I like, an' you ain't no shoes on to muss up the covers nuther. . . . There! . . . Gott im Himmel! You didn't lay down! You just fell plumb, like a hit steer."

"The baby," bubbled from between Kingsland's lips.

Grandpap wound an arm about the stick-like legs.

"I said as how I'd get 'er," he snapped. "Here! . . . Help me up with you feet! 'Raus mitt you!"

A dark night, a storm, a baby girl and then Rogues' Harbor bored through Kingsland's brain, bringing with them the hateful memory of a German household over which Ketchel reigned. He was terribly afraid, so obediently he lifted his feet and lay back panting.

Grandpap lost his frown, and bending over, he smiled.

"Gut boy," he lisped thickly. "Now I'll call my baby."

He tramped to the door, then out onto the porch, but he was so excited and shaking, he dared not venture down the steps.

"Hoo—Hoo," he shrilled like an owl.

Perceiving that Honor was waving her hand to him, he tottered back into the house, and when Mrs. Lessington and David Carmen entered the room they found him down on the floor, his arms thrown protectingly over Roderick Kingsland.

At the sight, both man and woman uttered an exclamation.

"I got 'im from upstairs, Mädchen," stammered Ketchel, "an' I brung 'im down. . . . So!"

Then exhausted and worn, he dropped forward against the couch and went to sleep with a long drawn out sigh.

Kingsland stared at the advancing man and woman. Then his lips opened wide, and he groaned and spoke.

"Claudia—Ketchel," he hesitated,—and then again, "Claudia—Ricardo."

One thin, old hand moved slowly upward toward Honor,

but bewildered, she flashed a glance at David. He had grown strangely white.

"I'll move your father, 'dearest," he said abruptly. "Thank God, the Senator can speak."

Carmen picked up the smiling, little, old man as if he had been a child, and carried him, still sleeping, to his bed.

Gently Mrs. Lessington took the damp fingers Kingsland held out to her and leaned over him.

"You want to speak, dear man," she urged.

"Yes," came forth with a sigh. "Where's Dave?"

"He's coming right back in a minute! . . . Ah, he's here!"

"Now," said David, putting his fingers on Kingsland's wrist, "I want you to rest for a little while, Senator. . . . No, don't move. Lie still!"

Kingsland turned his sunken eyes on the woman.

"I . . . must . . . talk.—I must speak to her," he stuttered. "I'll die if I don't."

"Then just a few words," permitted David. "Control yourself, sir, or I'll forbid any talk at all."

At that moment, Judy Ketchel sprang up on the porch and appeared in the doorway. She didn't notice Senator Kingsland at first, so used was she to seeing Honor and David making a fuss over grandpap. She stopped and colored as David looked at her. Surely she was a wonderful Judy, as slender as the stem of a lily in the white, summer dress, the tops of her new shoes lost under its hem.

"Teddy's comin' back, an mebbe he'll stay all day," she began. Then she saw Kingsland and went to Honor's side. "Lordy, how'd he get down here?" she gasped. "Teddy'll be back in less'n a hour."

"Where's the letter I gave you?" Kingsland slithered at her. "You—remember?"

The girl looked down at him, then up at Honor.

"He means," she told her, "the letter I brought to you that night. . . . Where is it?"

Mrs. Lessington went away, and when she came back she held the thick envelope Judy Ketchel had brought

weeks ago from Kingsland Court to the House of Mystery.

"This is it," she said gently.

Kingsland glanced at it, groaned and closed his eyes. He was so dreadfully white that David waved the letter back.

"He can't stand any more," he burst out authoritatively.

"I positively forbid——"

"Dave!" whined Kingsland. "Open the letter, Dave."

Honor passed it to Carmen, and after glancing at it, he held it out to Judy.

"It's yours, my dear," he observed. "Your name's on it."

Her hands behind her back, Judy shook her head.

"He said for you to open it," she stated, flushing.

Turning the letter over, Carmen examined the splotch of wax.

"Very well, then I will," he replied reluctantly, "but immediately after that I must put him to bed," and with this he deliberately broke the seal and drew out of the envelope several letters and legal documents.

"Read 'em, Dave," came in a whisper from the divan.

In deep silence, as Judy held Kingsland's twitching hands, David seated himself and ran his eyes over one paper after another. Honor was watching him steadily. She saw his face change from wonder to a dark frown.

"God," was all he said, then he read on, his lips set in a straight, hard line.

"Tell 'em," blurted Kingsland under his breath.

At Carmen's imperative gesture, both Judy and Honor yielded their places to him.

"Listen to me, Kingsland," he rapped out, his teeth coming together on the name, "is this all true?"

"Very true—Yes,—more than true. Tell Judy and—and——"

"Do you realize, sir," interrupted David, "that this makes your own children literally paupers? Peter and Teddy——"

"Tell 'em. Just tell 'em, Dave!"

As Carmen turned and faced them, a strange fear swept over Judy Ketchel and Honor Lessington. The contents



of the letter had changed his countenance from kindness and tender concern to outraged horror.

"All right then, here goes," he exclaimed hoarsely. "It seems by these," and he tapped the papers in his hands, "that Senator Kingsland had charge of Donald Ricardo's affairs,—that all the money the Kingslands have belongs to Don's wife and child——"

Honor tremblingly made a forward step.

"It can't be that way," she whispered. "He—couldn't have done such an awful thing! . . . David, tell him—tell him the baby's dead."

"It's not dead! God help me, it's not dead!" and with painful effort, Kingsland raised partly up, his eyes fiercely glowing on the other three. "You thought she had died because—because I—I paid the woman who took care of you to—to tell you so. Then, oh, merciful heaven!——"

A low sound came from Honor's lips.

"Then where's my baby? Where is it?" she cried frantically. "Oh, David, I don't want the money, I want my little baby."

Kingsland still on his elbow glanced from Honor to Judy, then back to the woman again.

"You've got her," he dribbled feebly. "There,—there—there she is! . . . Judy Ketchell! She's yours!" and muttering the name "Teddy," he slipped into unconsciousness without another word.



## CHAPTER XLII

### "DON'T SPOIL IT ALL"

AN hour or so later, the three of them, Judy Ketchel, Honor, and David Carmen were waiting for Teddy. It had taken the doctor a long time to bring back consciousness to Senator Kingsland so that he could be taken to bed, and now Judy was using all her arguments to persuade David not to tell Theodore the terrible thing his grandfather had done.

"But he's a man, little Judy, and he ought to know," Carmen told her. "He can't be treated like a child."

With Honor's arms about her, Judy leaned over toward him.

"But it's this way, sir," she said eagerly. "Mummy an' me ain't ever had much money. We can get along without it. Teddy's used to it, an' so's his father. . . . They'd die without a lot of it, an' we couldn't ever spend such a wad as that."

David controlled his desire to smile.

"You'd soon learn, my dear Judy," he replied gravely.

Judy paid no attention to this retort. She was earnestly considering him, her face white with appeal.

"An' it would hurt him so," she continued in tones of pathos. "Now just when he's goin' away so happy to be a beautiful soldier, please don't spoil it all. . . . Lordy, he's coming now. That's the tooter on his car."

She sprang up, but David caught her arm.

"He's got to know," he said sternly. "If you don't tell him, then *I* will."

The life seemed to fade from the lovely, young face.

"Please," she stammered. "My beautiful, new mother, please!"

Honor shook her head.

"Dearest, little girl," she quivered, "I think he ought to know about it too."

The sound of running footsteps in the garden came plainly to Judy's ears. Teddy was right at the door.

"I'll tell 'im then," she ejaculated. "Let me tell 'im."

Theodore halted suddenly as his eyes noted the expression on Judy's face. She was gazing at him, biting down hard on her lip, her wide-open lids brimming with tears.

"What's the matter?" he demanded, bewildered. "What's happened?"

Judy coughed, caught her breath and burst out,

"Aunt Claudy ain't my aunt at all!—She's—she's only—only—my mother."

An exclamation escaped from the boy's lips.

"Oh, how scared I was! You mean she's adopted you, Judy dear?" he smiled. "Well that's fine. . . . I feel a lot better about going away now."

Wiping her eyes with a handkerchief, Judy shook her head.

"No, not adopted, just my mother, my own mummy," she gasped. "An' I'm so awful glad."

Amazement took the place of the boy's satisfaction.

"How'd you find it out?" he asked slowly.

Judy threw an imploring look at Doctor Carmen, and as Kingsland had repeated to him, so did David Carmen say to her,

"Tell him, Judy."

She swallowed hard, twisted the little, white square of linen between her fingers.

"It's such a long story," she murmured, shaking her head. "Mebbe, we could tell it better after—after the war's over."

"No, now!" cut in Carmen.

Judy went directly to him.

"Well, then let me tell it like I see it, Mr. Dave," she urged softly. Then she turned back to Teddy. "It seems, boy-heart," she said to him, "a long time ago I had a father, an' Mrs. Lessington here is my mother. Then my father let your graddy take charge of all his money until I was grown up——" She flashed a blue glance at David's startled face, "an', well, today he give it all back to me, but—but it'll be just the same for you. Mr. Dave says,

he does, I'll get a lot of millions, and, oh, boy-heart, I'll give all mine right back to you and your daddy. I hate money, I do."

"Tell him the rest," thrust in David, drawing his hand over his mouth.

Then she bowed her head, the yellow curls drooping about her face.

"I—I stole your graddy from Kingsland Court, an' brung 'im here!" she gulped.

Teddy grew ashen. He was close beside her now, and she glanced up at him. He looked as if he were going to die.

Very gently she lifted his nerveless hand.

"He's up in bed, your graddy is," she choked. "I'll take you to him."

She did not ask permission of either David or Honor but drew the pale boy through the room, and, without speaking, they mounted the stairs together.

Teddy stood a moment and looked down upon his grandfather. The thin, drawn face, the worn mouth sagging at the corners and the closed lids made his heart fall like a stone in his breast.

"Graddy," he burst forth, sinking down, "graddy, darling."

Crying softly, Judy knelt beside him, one tender arm stealing about his neck.

Kingsland opened his glazed eyes and saw them. Then he rolled forward and placed one shaking, old hand on the red head, and let the other fall upon Judy's yellow curls.

"Teddy," he begged, "little Judy, forgive!"

"There's nothing to forgive, kind dear," breathed Judy, "Teddy knows all about it, an' it's all right."

A long, deep breath came from him as Kingsland sank back, and thus he died in the arms of his boy and Judy Ketchel.

The confusion that followed death's sudden coming to the House of Mystery, through which grandfather Ketchel slept, had subsided somewhat, and David was talking to Teddy in the living room.

"You'll have to bring your father here tonight, Theo-

dore," he said. "It'll be a bitter blow to him, but the sooner it's over the better."

"But I don't understand it all myself yet, Dave," replied Teddy. "Surely you'll explain a little more."

"I think Judy told you pretty plain," snapped David.

He was sorry now he had given the girl permission to tell the tale in her own way. He had a fierce desire for the Kingslands to know the sorrow their house had caused, and what Judy Ketchel, reared in the poverty of Rogues' Harbor, was bringing back to them. He bit his lip, though, as he remembered Judy had said Teddy was not to blame for his elders' misdeeds; and tomorrow the lad was going to take his place among the world's mightiest. So David quickly determined that Teddy should never hear anything from him but Judy's crooked tale of his grandfather's crooked life.

"Judy lived with her grandfather Ketchel, Ted," he explained presently. "The fact is, her mother didn't know she was alive. It's all mixed up, so don't worry about it any more, only this——" he grew embarrassed—"this," he went on more gently, "I've promised Judy that—that she should tell your father about it as she told you. Can you bring him here so I can keep that—promise?"

"Surest thing!" answered Teddy. "But, Dave, there's something you're not telling me."

"Then get Judy Ketchel to tell you if you think that," shot back David, "but you might take her word, I think."

Again his long hand smoothed the twitch out of the corners of his mouth. He had a hysterical desire to laugh as he thought of Judy's tumultuous explanation.

"Has she ever lied to you, Ted?" he asked later by a minute.

"No, of course not! But——"

"Then let it drop, old man," urged David. "Ah, you're going now. . . . I'll be here when you bring your father back. . . . Brace up, old chap!"

## CHAPTER XLIII

### "LET HIM DIE THEN"

THE first embarrassed greetings were over between father and son, and Teddy was steering the runabout up Buffalo Street.

"I've found graddy," he burst out after a painful silence.

A dizzy sensation passed over Peter, leaving him cold.

"Where is he?" he asked in a thick voice.

For the time they were passing another automobile, Theodore did not reply. It was difficult to keep back the whole terrible tale—difficult not to heap reproaches upon his father's head.

"You didn't tell me where he was," cried Peter, sharply. "You must realize how anxious I am."

"He's dead," replied Teddy. "Dave Carmen wants me to take you down the lake a ways. . . . All right, I suppose?"

Teddy was doing his best to be less constrained, but his father's departure from Ithaca with no word of explanation, his utter lack of affection for the dear, dead grandfather, filled the lad with scorn. In the darkness, Peter's fingers gripped hold of the car door. Teddy hadn't told him all he knew.

"Of course I'll go with you, son dear," he said as calmly as he could, "and you must understand I'd have been home before if I'd had any idea——"

"I was with him," Teddy cut in. "Though I'm glad you're here. . . . I've enlisted! . . . I'm starting tomorrow!"

He made the statement in short, jerky sentences. How he had dreaded this talk with his father no one could imagine. A heavy frown drew Peter's brows together.

"I'm sorry you took such a step, Ted," he remarked,

forcing his voice to suavity, "but I can get you released, I think."

Teddy didn't pay any attention to this because he knew his father wouldn't interfere with his plans after he'd heard Judy Ketchel's story.

Then in silence, they whirled past the Salt Works and on toward McKinney's. Peter wanted to ask where he was going. Yet something in the rigid boy, his sombre eyes on the winding, moon-lit road, kept back his rush of words. He threw a sharp glance about when the car slowed down before the House of Mystery, and Teddy, remembering David's promise to Judy Ketchel, made no move to leave the car.

"Graddy's up there in that house," he said brokenly. "Go through the garden. . . . I'll be up after a while, but if you want me, just shout."

Peter picked his way up the hill and through the narrow, shrub-bordered paths to the porch. At his knock, the door opened, and Judy Ketchel was facing him. A feeling of desperation surged over Peter Kingsland, and it flashed through his mind that this yellow-haired girl from Rogues' Harbor always cropped up when she was least expected. By sheer will power, he threw back his shoulders and stared at her.

"Come in," she said, moving backward slowly, "an' sit down, please."

Peter stepped into the room and whirling around centered his fierce, red-brown eyes upon her. All of a sudden, he realized that she was a remarkable, looking girl, with the wide, blue, blue eyes and the shower of curls strung over her arms and shoulders. However, Peter's mental decision that Judy Ketchel was pretty didn't make his hatred of her any less. In fact it only increased it the more. Seeing no one to address save her, he questioned icily,

"Where's Doctor Carmen? And my father——"

"Doctor Carmen'll be here after a bit, but I had to speak to you first," Judy interrupted him. "I said for you to sit down."

Her mind went back swiftly to the few times she'd seen



Teddy's father before, and her legs grew weak with apprehension. How cold and hard his voice was, how the dark, passionate lines were gathering in his face!

"And you, why should you have anything to say to me?" jerked out from between Peter's set lips.

"Just because I have," answered Judy, breathing fast. "None of the others, not one of 'em, know what I'm going to say. . . . When I get done, you can see Mr. Dave."

The haughty arrogance leaping into Peter's face sent Judy back several steps.

"I thought mebbe you'd never come back again after I 'phoned you to scoot an' get away from Stein," she flung out suddenly.

Peter's mouth sagged open, and for an instant, he couldn't speak.

"An' there ain't no more Citizens of the World in Ithaca," the girl went on, "so you're safe! Sliver Jim Shuckies is married to my cousin, Olive, an' don't you try to get him to do any more dirty tricks. My grand-daddy——"

Peter caught hold of himself, and one of his beautiful hands flinging out broke off Judy's words.

"I'm not interested in your family affairs, Miss Ketchel," he thundered. "Where's Doctor Carmen?"

"I said in a minute I'd get 'im," Judy rambled on in nervous tension. "I told Mr. Dave—Oh, I might as well say it now, he's goin' to be my bran'-new father in a few days."

"Who?" gasped Peter.

"Doctor Carmen," nodded Judy. "He's goin' to marry my new mother. . . . I just found out today I had a mummy in the world, an' she's—she's—my grandpap's dream-baby—Claudie Ketchel."

Peter suddenly lost control of himself. The secret was out then! He strode forward as if to strike her, but the steady blue gaze held back his upraised fist.

"You lie!" he snarled.

Judy shook her head.

"No, I don't lie, Mr. Kingsland, an' you know I don't uther. Teddy's graddy give me a bundle of papers a long

time ago, an' none of us knew what was in 'em 'til today. Mr. Dave read 'em all to my mother an' me. They said as how your daddy had took my daddy's money, an' how he was goin' to tell you. . . . An' I guess by the way you look, he did all right!”

“You lie,” shouted Peter again, and this time, maddened beyond endurance, he struck her.

Judy staggered, swayed, and a forlorn, little cry fell from her lips as she crumpled down in a heap. Peter wheeled on his heel, rushed to the door and came face to face with David Carmen.

Instantly, the doctor know what had happened. The little figure on the floor, a white, angry man, his red hair ruffled by nervous fingers, told their own tale.

“You miserable skunk!” he exclaimed. “Get back there, or I'll smash your face.”

Peter leaned against the wall and dully watched David place Judy on the divan. A slight noise snapped his eyes to the door. A beautiful woman with puzzled, dark eyes locked his gaze with hers. He dashed his hand across his brow and rubbed drops of water from it. Then when he looked again, her eyes had moved from him to Judy.

“What's happened to my little girl?” she questioned dazedly, swaying forward.

“The blasted Hun struck her,” grated David, catching her in his arms. “Oh, my dearest, don't cry that way. See! darling, she's moving a little. There! . . . Sit down, down beside her, Honor.” He raised up his head and glared at Peter. “This child has been your best friend in all the world,” he continued. “She brought your father here because she knew what you intended to do.” One long stride and the speaker was at Peter's side. Violently, he thrust him into a chair. “Now, you sit still, you German cur, and wait till I fix her up a bit. Then I'll tell you something that'll take that cursed, Kingsland pride out of your neck.”

Honor was crooning over Judy, paying no heed to David's reassurances, nor to the man in the chair. When the girl opened her eyes, she looked wildly into the dear face bending over her.

"I fell, I guess. I—I just fell," she stammered brokenly.

"Yes! You fell because you were knocked down," snapped David. "You got another blow from a Kingsland and a heavy one at that."

Judy closed her eyes wearily.

"Nobody hit me," she said distinctly. "I guess I was dizzy. That's why I couldn't stand up."

A peculiar sound came from Peter Kingsland, and David turned on him.

"You can see, can't you?" he snorted, "the stuff the child's made of. She'd lie for you, you low coward, because she loves Teddy so well."

A parched, dry tongue moved slowly along Peter's lips.

"He didn't hit me, Mr. Dave," Judy murmured, "I guess I could 'most say honest he didn't!"

"He did too," David shot back. "He struck you at the identical moment I reached the door. Now you listen to me, Judy Ketchel, you've tried for the last time to help a Kingsland. . . . They're a bad bunch!"

Judy opened her eyes and cast a reproachful glance at the angry doctor.

"An' I was so glad about my mummy," she grieved, "an' about you bein' my father. . . . Now you make me sorry, awful sorry!"

Honor spoke a few words of caress under her breath to which Judy paid no heed.

"I want to sit up," she said instead. "I'm all right. There! . . . See! . . . I'm up!" One slender, brown hand passed over her forehead. "What if he did give me a little swat?" she gulped. "I'm used to that, ain't I? I've been licked all my life, an' Teddy'll die if you tell him what 'is father did. An' tomorrow he's goin' away." She looked at Peter crouched forward in his chair, his eyes sunken deep in their sockets. "If any of you tell him, I swear I'll go get Denny an' run off somewheres. . . . Teddy'd die, I tell you!"

A harsh laugh fell from David's lips.

"Let him die then," he sent back straight into the suffering, young face. "He's a Kingsland, and today I've

discovered they're a worthless tribe. You'll never get my consent to link up with a rotten house like that one."

Lower and lower bent Peter until his face was in his hands. All his pride had gone, all the blood in his veins turned to water.

"It wasn't enough for Senator Kingsland to rob your father," David exclaimed, "but he was criminal enough to steal you from your mother. All your life, you've been abused, and, by God, I swear, you shan't marry a Kingsland if I can prevent it. How do I know but Ted'll be as much of a rotter as his grandfather was and his father is?"

Judy gazed at the flushed speaker as if she had never seen him before. Again she pushed back the damp hair from her brow, and again David caught sight of the red mark left by Peter's fist. Quite beside himself with rage, he caught at her arm.

"You heard what I said?" he demanded. "You're through with the Kingslands. You've got to be satisfied with a murdered father, a mother gray from grief, and this scoundrel's treatment tonight. Thank God the chief of them is—is dead!"

"I'm glad the poor thing is dead too," she moaned, "an' mebbe it's because I'm bad that I love him yet, dead or no dead. . . . Yes, I know what I read in his letter, all about my father, my beautiful mother, an' all about the money. I 'spose I'll have to do what you say, Mr. Dave, an' never see my Teddy again. Well then, I will, but not 'til you all promise you won't ever tell 'im 'bout his dear graddy or 'bout his father's knockin' me down. . . . It'd kill 'im, an' then I'd die too! . . . Oh, I want to die right now!"

Peter raised a haggard face. All the arrogance had dropped out of the dull, red-brown eyes. He saw the woman leaning against the pillowed divan, her body shaking. He saw David Carmen raised to his fullest height. Then he saw Judy Ketchel sink down and heard another bitter cry.

"I just want to die, that's all! . . . I won't ever use one penny of that money. It'd be all drippin' with my boy-heart's blood—my blood too. . . . Oh, mummy darlin', I

can't stand it. . . . Please, Mr. Dave, let me say one little word to Teddy before he goes away!"

"No! You shall not!" Carmen's exclamation was terrible in its finality.

Peter struggled to his feet.

"Yes!" he interjected. "She certainly shall see him!"

But no sooner had the words thundered out than he sank back into his chair. Judy was up in a minute.

"You both heard him!" she cried passionately. "Boy's daddy said I could see 'im. Then I can!"

"No," refused David, once more.

In quick action, Judy was at Kingsland's side, and her fingers fell tenderly upon the tumbled mass of red hair.

"Don't cry! . . . I'm here," she whispered.

Peter's powerful shoulders lifted, and then the silent ones about heard a man cry forth his sin. In amazement, David Carmen saw him thrust out his arms and take Judy into them.

"Little girl," faltered Peter. "Oh, God! I can't ask you to forgive me, I can't, but my boy, my beautiful boy! He's not like the rest of the Kingslands! . . . He's good and kind and the purest boy that ever lived."

"So he is," sobbed Judy, "an' only a little while ago, he was all mine——"

"You lied for him twice, Judy Ketchel," broke in Carmen, and Judy turned her blue eyes upon him.

"I'm sorry for that," she returned. "Awful sorry, Mr. Dave! Forgimme me. . . . I hate a liar from my boots up. I did lie, so I did! But—But I say this, an' always will, I'd die for Teddy a hundred times a day to keep his heart from breakin'."

Once more Peter staggered to his feet still holding his grip on the girl.

"Dave," he hesitated, "Dave——"

But before he could finish his plea, Teddy came to the door. The boy walked in but halted, embarrassed. When he realized Judy was in Peter's arms, a wry smile touched his lips, but it vanished instantly. The look she gave him, the gravity of the pain-stricken, young face, made Carmen sit down helplessly.

“My God!” he exclaimed. “My hands’re up. . . . That’s all.”

Then without any explanation, Peter placed the girl’s fingers in Teddy’s hand and turned to Carmen.

“My father,” he panted, “may I go to him—alone?”

And overcome with emotion, David led him silently to the stair door.

For a few tense moments, the four people below heard Peter stumble from room to room, and at length, because quietude had fallen above they knew the prodigal son had found his dead and was alone with it.

Judy was the first to stir, also first to speak.

“Teddy darlin’, my bran’-new father’s goin’ to like you an’ me awful well someday,” she said, misty-eyed, “an’ my beautiful mummy too. When you get back from the war I’ll know a heap, but till then, I’m goin’ to stay with my folks, my—my new father—and my—pretty mother—an’ grandpap.”

So what was there for David to do but relent and smile upon them, and, well—Little Judy Ketchel had come into her own at last.



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